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NEW STATESMAN
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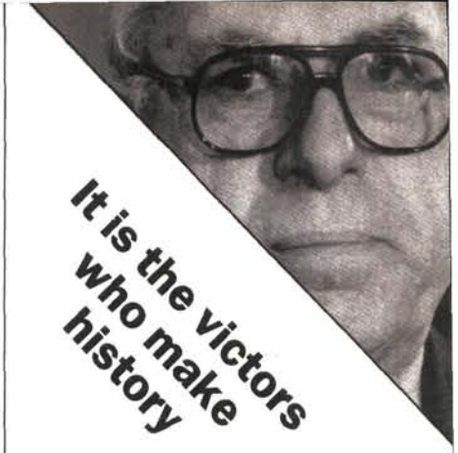
The defence dilemma — can Labour convince?
China's reforms get stuck; Moscow nights stay straight
The real Sally Bowles; Test Department; crime fiction



It is the victors who make history

STILL HER PARTY?

'Ideology is by its nature extremist and parties in the grip of it move towards the wings'

Sir Ian Gilmour

Photo: John Sturrock/NETWORK

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Healthy Questions.

In an area as controversial as health care, there are bound to be many questions. But when it comes to NHS medicine supply the answers are often assumed. If you want more information about British medicines and their contribution to the nation's health and wealth, contact ABPI at the address below.

Q. How does the pharmaceutical industry affect the UK economy?

A. In 1985 UK pharmaceutical exports exceeded imports by over £830 million. Our domestic spending on medicines is only half that of our major competitors like the US, Japan and Germany. If Britain is to be able to afford good welfare services, we must be able to pay for them – pharmaceuticals are an area in which this country is outstandingly successful.

Q. What contribution to UK employment does the pharmaceutical industry make?

A. Over 80,000 people are employed directly by the UK pharmaceutical industry. A further 250,000 to 300,000 British jobs owe their existence indirectly to the pharmaceutical industry.

Q. Why is the number of NHS prescriptions rising?

A. Between 1979 and 1985 the total number of prescriptions dispensed in the UK rose by only 5%. Factors involved included the 'ageing' of the population, rising unemployment and the shift to community care. For some groups of medicines, such as tranquillisers, the total fell significantly.

Q. Does the pharmaceutical industry care about 'Third World' health?

A. Only about 10% of the UK pharmaceutical industry's revenue is derived from the entire Third World. Yet through ABPI, British medicine manufacturers accept their responsibility to aid global health progress. For example, pilot projects to improve medicine distribution are being funded in East Africa and the Maldives.

Q. Why should all the growth money available to the NHS go to medicine costs?

A. It does not. Since 1982 the proportion of NHS resources going to pharmaceuticals (costed in manufacturers' prices) has stayed roughly constant. Less than one NHS pound in ten goes on medicines. Some 80% of NHS medicines are prescribed by General Practitioners. DHSS figures show that between 1979 and 1984 overall spending on the family practitioner services went up 10% more than their medicine costs.

Q. Haven't we already got the medicines we need?

A. Medicines and vaccines are not the only key to better health. But they have contributed significantly to the control of infections and the relief of disorders like depression, arthritis and heart disease. Unfortunately, however, many illnesses are still incurable, or only partly treatable. Providing research investment continues, many more effective pharmaceuticals will be developed to protect against conditions such as cancers, multiple sclerosis and AIDS.

Q. Does the pharmaceutical industry spend more on promotion than research?

A. In Britain the pharmaceutical industry spends, from its NHS income, twice as much on research as it does on promotion/information. If export earnings are added, UK research spending stands at over £500 million, more than three times UK promotional and allied outlays.

Q. Isn't the pharmaceutical industry excessively profitable?

A. The UK pharmaceutical industry's profits from the NHS are currently below the average for the companies quoted in the "Financial Times" 500 Index. The UK pharmaceutical industry has consistently invested more in this country than it has made in profit from the NHS.

For further information about medicines and health in Britain, write to Gail Turner at The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry's Health Information Desk, or telephone her on 01-930 3477.

British Medicines and Britain's Health.
The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry.
ABPI, 12 Whitehall, London SW1A 2DY.

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NEXT WEEK

Going nowhere: the immigration debate. It's a subject that used to arouse emotions but now there's almost a conspiracy of silence among opposition parties. JOLYON JENKINS questions the lack of *constructive* criticism

Kinnock the master

NEIL KINNOCK rose to the occasion in Blackpool. As we said last week, he is able to make himself look like a potential Prime Minister, and he triumphantly did. Insofar as one man can grip a party like Labour, he does so now, aided by good staffwork (especially on the presentational side) and a number of leading political and trade union figures very willing to feed his obvious hunger for power because in doing so it feeds their own.

His conference speech on Tuesday proposed a passionate crusade for decency. In appealing to a moral majority which was 'broad minded and compassionate', he offered them a Labour Party pledged to make war on crime, to raise productivity and to restrain wages (implicitly, still). Planning and public — rather, social — ownership were mooted but not made central. *This* was: 'We must literally make our way, produce our way, sell our way to recovery. There is no other way to earn the living we want for ourselves and and our children.'

How far social ownership matches up to wider share ownership, widened still further by the success of the Trustee Savings Bank sale, a success British Gas now expects to repeat, remains to be seen. That's a battle for the future: the present party position on social ownership represents an accommodation between John Smith, the shadow trade and industry secretary on the right of the party and David Blunkett, leader of Sheffield City Council, on the left: it has not fully taken on the real world.

Facing down the right

When it and other policies do, the leadership's room for manoeuvre will be greatly bolstered by a national executive which has lost three more ideologues and gained three more pragmatists. Add to this a party rank and file which appear born again to the joys of follow-their-leader, and Kinnock can reasonably expect to have a party in as good a shape as at any time in the past two decades to fight the next election without falling into internal dispute.

But Blackpool showed something else. It showed that Labour's leader is willing to take on the right wing of the party and to face them down on issues which — though they really cannot be used to define left or right except in Labour's own terms — are fundamental to the country. Denis Healey's admission that it was 'just conceivable' that US nuclear bases might stay on British soil if our alliance partners could not be persuaded that it would be good for security if they went is the tip of an iceberg of doubts and frank disagreement within the shadow cabinet and in parts of the Labour movement over the wisdom of Britain throwing in its nuclear hand for no guaranteed gain.

Healey has proposed moving towards a non-nuclear strategy for some time: in his Fabian lecture last November, he said that 'there is a growing feeling among military experts that NATO must look in a different direction — towards a non-provocative strategy of conventional deterrence which could protect NATO territory without using nuclear weapons if deterrence should fail'. But he also advocated what is an essentially phased approach to reducing nuclear arsenals, and thus tension: a freeze on weapons, a ban on testing of delivery systems, then of warheads. This would, he said, make it 'much easier to attack the problem of cutting existing arsenals'. Further, he encouraged much greater openness between the two superpowers on their defence preparations: saying that 'each side is driven by fears that are the mirror image of the other's'.

Space for reason

As he knows well, such a strategy depends on a great effort of advocacy and practical example (he refers with pride to his own part, when Defence Secretary in the 1960s, in developing the NATO flexible nuclear response, which made escalation to nuclear war slower — but it was still a nuclear strategy). The argument that the struggle for a more secure world is better served by staying in than throwing in is still one that Labour has to face: though it is rather easier to face than the charge against the government, that it has acquiesced in a US build up of arms and tension unparalleled since the war.

The nuclear power argument, too, has been won by the left (again, there is no ideological content in it): Kinnock has been willing, in the end, to let it go against Dr John Cunningham, his formerly favoured environment spokesman. Cunningham has said he will put constituents' interests before policy, and may have to be reshuffled: but Labour cannot so easily reshuffle the fears of the workers employed in the nuclear industry, or those of consumers worried by future shortages, or present relative expense, of electricity.

In both these nuclear arguments, visions of holocausts won't work. These have been held up for 30 years, but left the majority unconvinced time and again. We have to have reasonable doubt answered by reasonable propositions. Kinnock has shown himself capable of providing the space in which that can now be done. It *must* now be done. □

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Blackpool (1): Haunting Hatton . . .

After the damp squid of Kilroy-Silk's memoirs, acute chequebook editors should now be pursuing Derek Hatton for the real inside story. Writing, even with the aid of a ghost, is the only career left for someone who has now ceased to haunt the Labour Party.

The comrades now rue the day they first adopted and promoted him. Instead of their planned media beanfeast his refusal to go on the platform, based more on psychopathology than politics, left their opponents, all six million of them, in clear possession of the field. It was clear that the man who couldn't bring himself to appear before the NEC, or before the disciplinary procedures of Knowsley Council, wasn't going to appear before a conference where his support was, to say the least, somewhat short of adulatory.

As a further twist to his discomfort, his entrance was flanked by women party stewards from Liverpool, who as delegates at last year's conference did so much to expose the pretensions of Militant in the city. Derek's response to the presence of Liverpool party organiser Peter Kilfoyle was to muse aloud what he could do with him in 30 seconds in the ring. But Derek was already out for the count, personally and politically.

His refusal to obey Tendency orders in Broadgreen has had that constituency suspended. The refusal to speak at the conference can be dismissed by others as admission that there wasn't much to be said in defence anyway, but Militant will be deeply unhappy at the lost opportunity for publicity. Tony Mulhearn's court case against his expulsion, based on lack of 'natural justice', is unlikely to be helped by a plea that they couldn't appear without the Capitalist Media to support them.

It raises the serious question of how long the Tendency can afford the luxury of having Hatton as a member. Sacked from his job with Knowsley, likely to be knocked off the council, his life-style so far hasn't trained him to live on the bread and enthusiasm of a Militant full-timer's salary. His only asset for the tendency is the negative one of being able and willing to blow the gaffe on Militant's organisation if he isn't maintained and supported politically and socially in the style to which he has so conspicuously been accustomed.

The minor amendments to the standing orders for Labour groups restricting membership to party members put the organisational stake through the heart of his council career, while the National Constitutional Committee structure, despite Larry Whitty's disingenous disclaimers, lays the way for more effective action against Militant throughout the constituencies.

The most outstanding casualty of the Militant debacle has of course been Eric Heffer (see right). The walk from the rostrum last year was a short step for a pedestrian, but a major faux pas for a political career. While David Blunkett shot to the top of the constituency section, Dennis Skinner and Tony Benn held on to a very respectable vote, despite their opposition to expulsions, but Eric's over-enthusiastic identification with the Liverpool events obviously grated on the nerves of Constituency delegates. He actually got fewer constituencies voting for him than voted against the expulsion, which symptomises a traumatic injury to his political reputation from which it is unlikely to recover.

Discipline was being sharp everywhere. On Sunday a young person arrived with credentials alleging him to be a Euro MP, namely one Leslie Huckfield. When challenged, he ran off leaving the stewards with the offending document. But someone remembered that they'd seen Les in the conference, and so a search was arranged, made more difficult by his most recent disguise — he's shaved his beard off.

When he was found, he had another set of credentials — from the London region co-op. Joyce Gould marched him out of the conference hall to explain himself to the standing orders committee, but of course he had no idea who had attempted to take his identity in vain. He excused himself, by saying he'd lost his MEP's card, and the committee had no option (probably much to their chagrin) than to accept his explanations.

Whether Crosby constituency will accept John Linden's excuses is another matter. He gave one of the constituency's much sought after visitors' tickets to Claire Doyle, expelled several years ago with the rest of the editorial board. ●

The Shape Of Things To Come...

The task before the left is clear: to create popular support for socialism, to campaign with all sections of our community, and to create an accessible style of left politics.

Our aims can only be realised through activism in and beyond the Party, in the unions, the women's movement, and youth and student politics, as well as campaigns such as *Lesbian and Gay Rights*, CND and *Anti-Apartheid*.

With over 1200 members, ward, union and CLP affiliates, local groups and strong networks, in the LPYS and Labour Students the LCC is the pressure group the Labour Party needs.

The *Labour Co-ordinating Committee* — the largest, most effective, democratic-left pressure group of the Labour Party. Our task is to help build a modern, revitalised socialist party — A Party ready for government.

If you would like to know more about the LCC return this slip to us.

.....Name

.....Address

LCC, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG 01-741 7810

Blackpool (2) . . . Heffer sits tight

It was easy to sort out the various wings of Labour's Left. The ultras disputed Neil Kinnock's parentage vociferously, but the cuddlies had a new rallying call.

Wandering through the fringe, it was clear that all rows led to Roy. Comrade Hattersley's excursion into unilateralism, even if it was only a unilateral declaration of no first use of exchange controls, was the subject of almost every speech.

David Blunkett showed that even cuddlies can be sharp, with his allegation that the Alliance had retained the services of an alchemist 'for who else could transmute Steel to Jelly?' he asked. Ousted Eric of course was disappointing everyone by refusing to be silly.

But one unreported walk-out we heard of with sisterly concern was the young reporter asked to file copy on what type of hearty breakfast the condemned Hatton was eating. 'Can you imagine what people would have thought?' she said, with a move based less on morals than on taste.

Meanwhile, back in the fringe, Robin Cook was telling with relish about how the Betting and Gaming levy board had considered that the financial futures market needs a casino licence. It must be a good story because he's used it in every public speech he made for the last year, and it still raises a laugh. ●

Drawn stumps

The *New Statesman* cricket team has just shown that like Neil, we can play the buggers at their own game and win. In a triumphant season, the team massacred many of our competitor magazines and various political factions, finishing with 16 wins and just four defeats. The team only succumbed to the capitalist enterprise of *Financial Weekly*, the literati of the Hampstead Theatre, NALGO and a team called Non-conformists whose captain proved it by playing in braces. Another three avoided defeat: ACAS who, fielding one short, used their conciliation skills to convince the *New Statesman* to let them bat till their last man was out despite gathering storm clouds; DES; and Militant, whose team handed out membership applications during the tea interval to those players they reckoned were 'members of the working class'. ●

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PETER KELLNER

Kinnock shapes Labour in his own image — almost

IT IS NOT inconceivable that the Conservatives will exploit any divisions they can find in the Labour Party on defence: and not inconceivable that the media will amplify those differences whenever it can. But until Denis Healey's interview with *Panorama*, a clear consensus had formed among the chattering classes gathered at Blackpool to witness this year's party conference: it would be a boring week.

A large majority had been lined up to expel the eight infiltrators from the Revolutionary Socialist League (Militant to their friends and inadequately informed enemies). By Sunday evening the sting had been drawn from the debate on nuclear power, with Neil Kinnock agreeing to accept the miners' motion, provided that it was qualified by 'clarification of several important areas'.

Moreover, several other issues that have divided the party in the past have been settled. Ugly fissures that previously threatened to trip up the innocent seeker after socialism have now been filled with fertile soil and planted with fragrant red roses. Scrap Polaris? Even Denis Healey agrees. Bring BT back under public control? David Blunkett and John Smith are at one. Leave the Common Market? If you can get a quorum to accuse the party leadership of betrayal on this, you're a better Little Englander than I.

Sharp-eyed readers will have noticed that deliberate mistake a few sentences ago. I referred to 'Neil Kinnock agreeing to accept the miners' motion' on nuclear power. Technically, of course, it was the National Executive that accepted the resolution, not the party leader. But the reality on this, as on most contentious issues these days, is that Kinnock's view prevails.

Kinnock's first instinct when the Executive met on Sunday was to oppose Arthur Scargill. That, however, would have led to 'Row Split Shock Horror' stories, and the possibility that Kinnock — sorry, the Executive — would be defeated. Kinnock's view changed when he examined the final, composite version of the NUM motion.

It didn't demand the 'immediate closure' of nuclear power stations, or their phasing out within the lifetime of a single parliament. It did instruct 'the next Labour government to phase out all existing nuclear power plants': but that form of words left an unintended — or possibly intended — ambiguity. It could be interpreted to mean that the process of phasing out should be started, but need not be completed by 'the next Labour government'. Kinnock said that he would be happy with the motion as long as everyone realised that the process could take decades to complete. Collapse of stout party conflict.

THE SIGNIFICANCE of this episode lies less in the substance of Labour's energy policy than in the way internal party controversy has been contained. For months we have had glimpses of Kinnock's ability to get his way on the Executive — over the expulsion of Derek Hatton and his RSL comrades, for example. What has happened at Blackpool this week is the culmination of that process. Kinnock's left-wing critics have found themselves in an isolated minority, while his left-of-centre friends have discovered that loyalty is proving to be more popular than dissent. Eric Heffer's defeat in this week's Executive elections show how far the tide has deserted the left, leaving its heroes and ambitions emphatically beached.

Even before those election results, evidence of the left's dwindling power came from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. As part of its advice on whom left-wing delegates should support in the elections, the CLPD published the voting records of all NEC members on 18 left-versus-the-rest divisions.

> ***'Labour has to persuade voters that the status quo is more dangerous than change.'***

Much of the CLPD's table provides unsurprising information — such as the fact that on all 18 occasions Kinnock and Dennis Skinner found themselves voting in opposite directions. More notable has been the evolution of the voting patterns of five mainstream left-wingers: Michael Meacher, David Blunkett, Tom Sawyer (of NUPE), Eddie Haigh (Transport Workers) and Eric Clarke (Miners). In seven votes between last September and late February, the combined record of these five was: for the far-left position 26, for Kinnock's position 8. Between late February and June their record in a further seven divisions was: left 9, Kinnock 17. And in the final four divisions in July, none of them supported the left position at all: each of them, when they voted, supported Kinnock.

So all the signs from both the Executive and the conference at the beginning of this week were of a party more united and determined to win the next general election than at any time in recent memory. It looked as if the conference would be not about party splits, but about policies for the next Labour government: its plans for the economy, health, education and so on. Hence the verdict of the chattering classes that it would be a boring week. And then came Denis Healey's appearance on *Panorama*.

APART FROM the most optimistic unilateralists, few people believe that Labour can turn defence into a significant vote-winner. The task rather is to prevent it becoming a vote-loser. The realist-optimist case for believing that this task can be accomplished goes as follows.

Nuclear weapons, like nuclear power, are becoming increasingly unpopular. Voters are gradually coming to realise that Polaris serves no useful purpose; it does not even guarantee a place for Britain, either naked or clothed, in the conference chamber. Spending money on nuclear weapons means starving the army, navy and air force of the everyday weapons they need to help defend Britain and Western Europe from attack. The siting of American nuclear weapons in Britain makes this country more vulnerable, not less. And there are votes to be won by asserting Whitehall's independence from Washington.

That line of reasoning requires two assumptions: First, that Labour's defence policy can withstand the assaults that will be made on it during a general election campaign: and second that Labour's response will be not only coherent but united.

One does not have to be in the pay of Conservative Central Office to question both assumptions. Public opinion today may look encouraging: Labour Party officials have carefully leaked private poll findings which show that a large majority think that the present government is excessively influenced by the Reagan Administration. Such poll findings, however, record opinion before it has been subjected to the full blast of Conservative propaganda. Labour will be portrayed as the party that wants to change the status quo, and 'threatens' to take this country into the perils of an uncertain future for Anglo-American relations.

The problem for almost any radical on almost any issue is that the status quo can be powerfully seductive. Lots of voters may think we spend too much on defence, may distrust Washington, and may be horrified by the prospect of nuclear war: isn't it better to leave things as they are, rather than risk sudden change?

LABOUR HAS to persuade voters that the status quo is more dangerous than change. It will not be easy. If the party allows the smallest indiscretion to be magnified and portrayed as division within the leadership, it will be impossible. The fuss over Healey's appearance on Monday night's *Panorama* provides a clear warning of what could happen, continuously and on a much larger scale, during the next election campaign. As always, Healey's words on Tuesday morning, when he carefully relocated himself firmly within the party policy, received less attention than his original remark that it was 'not inconceivable' that American nuclear weapons might stay.

It would help Labour if the party's shadow defence secretary could project a clearer, more secure image of the party's policies than Denzil Davies has managed to do. Davies can claim to have achieved a remarkable amount inside the party to help it unite around an agreed policy. But it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Healey-Davies combination would be vulnerable in the harsh, grubby world of a close-fought general election campaign. Kinnock is understandably reluctant to switch shadow cabinet portfolios. In a few weeks' time he will have his last chance to decide whether every member of his team really is in the right place. Labour has had a good week: it has yet to prove it is able to have a good election campaign. □

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DIARY

Ten years ago this Saturday, my anti-fascist play *Destiny* opened at the Other Place, the Royal Shakespeare Company's small Stratford theatre, towards the end of a season that is now rightly regarded as a shining moment in the RSC's history. Led by Ian McKellen and Judi Dench (whose *Macbeth*, directed by Trevor Nunn, beggared the word 'definitive'), the 1976 Stratford company was both an effective, committed and enthusiastic ensemble *and* a remarkable assemblage of individual talent — a combination nowadays as unlikely as Single Mothers for Parkinson's Return.

The *Destiny* troupe itself begs retrospective listing in the manner of provincial theatre billboards, including as it did John Nettles (*Bergerac*), Bob Peck (*Edge of Darkness*), Paul Shelly (*Paradise Postponed*) and Cheri Lunghi (*Monocled Mutineer*). And that's not to mention Greg Hicks, probably the National Theatre's most significant young male lead, nor Frances Viner, a good third of *Raving Beauties*, nor the extraordinary Ian McDiarmid, presently giving us Pam Gems' *Robespierre* and soon to take on Marlowe's *Edward II*; nor indeed Michael Pennington, recently highly effective at the classier end of the TV market as the guy in the white suit with the swollen ankles and the murky past.

All of which is superficially in stark contrast to the eventual fate of a subsequent RSC project, the revival of *Nicholas Nickleby*, now beached on Broadway, and set to limp on for a couple more weeks before the brokers' men move in. In fact, however, the original (and in many ways the subsequent) *Nickleby* was — in its collaborative creation and ensemble style — one of the most significant outgrowths of the spirit of '76. What *Nickleby*'s present failure calls into question is neither the project nor its revival, but its location. What the RSC is painfully discovering is that dramatic art and the commercial marketplace coexist only rarely, under highly controlled circumstances and almost always for short periods of time. Whereas, if one was to build an identikit model of an environment in which theatre could both flower of itself and attract large and enthusiastic audiences to witness it, it would be the sort of Royal Shakespeare Company that I began working with ten years ago.

○

Bernard Shaw is reputed to have claimed (in his youth, methinks) that the sole purpose of his art was to induce people to vote on the progressive side in the forthcoming county council elections. I have long since ceased to judge the effectiveness of my work in such a measurably utilitarian light, but there is no doubt in my mind that — perhaps alone of my plays — *Destiny* did have a quantifiable effect on the way people saw the world and hence, who knows, how they acted in it. This fact was not so much to do with the brilliance and perspicuity of the text, but rather with the timing of its arrival at the Aldwych Theatre in London, in May 1977, when the National Front was beginning to be seen (and not before time) as more than merely another example of the British penchant for far-right political eccentricity. The message of the play — that the NF was not merely an anti-immigration pressure group but was in fact an authentic fascist party, fired by a conscious National Socialist ideology — was at the time opposed to the prevailing orthodoxy (particularly of the Front-watchers on the *Guardian*), and I like to think (well, no, actually, I *do* think) that the piece played a significant role in turning opinion round.

○

The 'NF is a Nazi Front' message was important on the left too, where the word 'fascist' (and even 'Nazi') had tended for some years to be flung about like confetti. Even now, I baulk when Labour politicians (by no means all on the left) attach the soubriquet to Thatcher or her ism, and I think I'm right to do so. But when American friends apply the adjective to what's happening in the US, I find myself seeing more of the point than I used to.

The terrifying Pat Robertson leads a mass-movement of confused and desperate people from the middle reaches of society; he has a conspiracy theory which unites enemies above and below (the moral minorities of the inner cities, manipulated and inspired by the liberal establishment); he is himself the puppet of political forces which are less interested in his links with the Lord than the numbers he delivers (it tends to be forgotten that the new fundamentalist right — in its organisational form — was an initiative not of religious ministers but of political activists — many of whom, like Richard Viguerie of the 'mail order right', had cut their teeth working for the Barry Goldwater and George Wallace campaigns). The difference of course is that Robertson is not directly interested in race as a social pollutant, but is rather obsessed with sexuality as the cutting edge of the latter-day Learned Elders of Liberalism and their plot to destroy all that is decent and true.

○

In *Destiny*, there is a self-conscious lack of reference to the sexual lives (or prejudices) of the characters: little did I think that ten years on a Tory minister would be arguing against special efforts to combat Aids on the grounds that homosexuals catch it. I hope therefore that Our Leader's own confession to a less than progressive line on 'permissiveness' was a slip of the tongue. The defence of the undoubted gains of the last 30 years does not necessarily involve the complexity of the pornography debate — nor need it even confront that dangerously punitive attitude to rape which appears increasingly to be applied — via syllogistic logic — to all crimes which can be defined, literally or metaphorically, as 'male'. No, the first task now is a simple civil libertarian counter-attack against homophobia on the one hand, and, on the other, a reassertion of the basic values of personal responsibility, freedom and choice. Might we start by remembering that unwanted teenage pregnancies shot up (in some boroughs, trebled) under the brief and unhappy period of Gillick Triumphant; and also might we recall than in Rev Robertson's United States, where only 15 per cent of school districts allow sex education in the classroom, the teenage birthrate is more than double that of Britain and France, three times that of Sweden, and seven times that of Holland.

○

Overt sexuality is of course one of the sticks used to beat the BBC (I still keep open my 'fuck file' of correspondence with the Corporation's thought police on that topic). Another regular accusation concerns the historical accuracy of so-called 'drama-documentaries'. I came in for some of this flak when *Destiny* was televised, and people accused me of mendaciously asserting that real, actual businessmen were or were about to support the National Front.

It's quite nice to be reminded of this controversy a week after the death of Air Vice Marshal Donald Bennett, whose considerable bank balance (in combination with his neanderthal political views) did so much to excite the greedy cohorts of the ultra-right in the '70s. However, *Destiny* was not fact but fiction, not about what is but what could be, in the same way that Alan Bleasdale's *Monocled Mutineer* is not about what did happen but what might have done. That this manufactured cause célèbre might get us Lord King as BBC Chairman is a horrible thought.

David Edgar

ROGER WODDIS

After Weinberger

(and Robert Southey)

It was a Monday evening,
  And Caspar jumped the gun
By warning us what ills would flow
  If Labour ever won;
And talking with him on the screen
Were critics of the war machine.

'Why do you rubbish,' said young Neil,
  'The cause that we espouse?'
And doughty Denis stared ahead
  Beneath his bushy brows.
And all of them discussed the war,
And what they would be fighting for.

'It is the Russians,' Caspar cried,
  'Who pose the greatest threat;
But as to whether we'll survive,
  I wouldn't like to bet.
But Richard Perle and I agree
'Twill be a famous victory.'

The message that he left was clear
  Before the credits rolled:
'All that you British have to do
  Is what you're damn well told,
And never try to break the grip
Cementing our relationship.'

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No heir for Margaret

Thatcher has broken the Tory mould but established no succession. As her party — in conference this coming week — peers timidly beyond her for who might come after,* SARAH BENTON *reports on the mood of the Tories after seven fat years in power

Clockwise: from top: 'beefcake' Baker, 'stiff' Hurd, 'tarnished' Walker, 'boring' Howe and 'unreliable' Heseltine. Heaven help the Conservatives

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THE DAYS are getting shorter, the dole queues getting longer — and the tempers of the Tory faithful are becoming frayed. Two years ago, as it dawned on the members that hostility to the government was growing, they sent in anxious motions — 72 in all — urging the government to look to its image. Welwyn and Hatfield captured the tone with its polite proposition that 'the Conservative case is not being presented as skilfully as it should be and that the Party should give a much greater priority to ensuring that the government's policies and achievements are more clearly understood by the electorate.'

That was 1984. This year, among the 111 motions clustering thick and sharp on the government's image, Welwyn and Hatfield returns to the point with a terse 'demand that the Conservative Party makes an in-depth study of its presentation in order to improve its image and publicity.' Other constituency associations share the frustration. Lewisham West changes from 'urging' the government to put its case better to 'deploring' its failure to do so. In rural Sussex the measure of the goverment's failure is the menace of the enemy; from 'concern' at poor presentation in 1984, Wealden association is now insisting that the government must alert the 'man in the street' to the dangers of a communist government.

Taken on their own, such motions reveal little dissatisfaction with government policy. They reveal the wish to believe that the electorate fails to appreciate what the government has done because of poor presentation, made worse by bias in the media. In 1984 there was only one motion, from North West Surrey, regretting that 'the infiltration of extremists' in the media had not been 'redressed'. This year, five associations from Dagenham to Macclesfield deplore the 'left wing bias' in the BBC from, in the word of South East Cambridgeshire, the news through Woman's Hour to The Archers. Communists controlling Woman's Hour may be a discomforting thought — but not half so discomforting as the possibility that, as one Tory Midlands MP said, if what the government had done were explained better, the electorate would like it even less.

Three trends can now be discerned in the Conservative Party. There is the far Right, urging Mrs Thatcher to 'finish the agenda'. There are in

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the word of some young conservatives, 'the stodgies', who feel vaguely uncomfortable about the government's 'values' but would tolerate them if only they were popular — which they clearly are not. And there is the more articulate left — the moderates or traditionalists as they call themselves, the wets as everybody else has called them.

Taken together, the last two trends constitute the large majority of the Conservative Party. But this by no means guarantees the safe return of the party into their hands. Critics of the party leadership from the urbane and lofty Sir Ian Gilmour to young Angela Hills in Newcastle, a vice-chairman of the Young Conservatives last year, characterise that leadership in the same way — an aberration, a momentary madness, hi-jackers of the party, a dangerous fringe. They are unshaken in their belief that they are the heirs of the 'true Conservatism', a heritage which stretches back beyond Disraeli — a copy of Disraeli's *Sybil* should be supplied by party funds to every Tory MP first elected in 1979 and 1983, proposed High Peak association one year, appalled at the hiatus in party tradition — and which is more powerful than any way out faction.

They do not intend to do anything to reclaim their party. They intend to wait. Because the Conservative Party has no channels of organised dissent, and puts a unique emphasis on leadership, their Conservatism can only dominate the party when Mrs Thatcher is no longer leader. The hopeful say this will be only for a year or two at most after the election if she wins it, and immediately after the election if she loses. The sceptical — those in the House of Commons rather than those outside — agree she will go at once if the party loses the next election. Her ambition to make an ineradicable imprint on history, to earn the stature, she once said wistfully, of 'mother of the nation', may keep her in office a lot longer if she wins.

Outright majority

But the chances of an outright overall majority for the Conservatives dim by the week, and few believe she would be ready to treat with the Alliance. The heritage of the traditionalists would find nothing distasteful in principle about coalition government, and it is from them that a new leader would have to be chosen. There are some Tory MPs who would prefer a hung parliament to an outright Tory win.

ODDLY, GIVEN Mrs Thatcher's years of dominance in government, it is probably from the moderates that the next leader will be drawn anyway, and it is in the emergence of such a new leader that the alliance of the critical and the uneasy is investing its hopes. Most agree that there are currently five front runners: Peter Walker (Energy), Kenneth Baker (Education), Kenneth Clarke (Employment Minister), Douglas Hurd (Home Secretary) and Michael Heseltine (full-time dissident).

If Kenneth Baker manages to produce something coherent in education policy — there are 141 motions down on education, easily more than on any other subject, demanding action of some sort — he will be the front runner by the end of the year. Described in a country house magazine as the 'female Sloane Ranger's beefcake', he has both good 'moderate' credentials which kept him on the backbench until 1981, and a good record of initiative and competence on new technology, which got him off the backbench and into the Cabinet by 1985.

His flaws are less obvious anyway than those of Peter Walker (been around too long; tarnished by miners' strike) Ken Clarke (unproven and inexperienced) Douglas Hurd (cold and stiff) or Michael Heseltine (unreliable; arouses suspect passions in the bosom of the members; their admiration is no substitute for the springboard of Cabinet or shadow Cabinet office — both unattainable while Mrs Thatcher is leader.)

But even with their flaws, it's a stronger line-up than the Thatcherites have to offer: Sir Geoffrey Howe — 'the most boring man in Europe' and associated with the narrowest of economic politics; his hopes would rest on being the compromise candidate; Nigel Lawson, 'simply not a nice man', unpopular with backbenchers. Handsome John Moore would be too young and inexperienced. John Biffen is admired — but no-one knows quite which side he is on.

And by common accord, Norman Tebbit just

The critic in the tower

MRS THATCHER'S most profound critics are in her own party. Much of the left rather admires her, sees her as in tune with movements it has ignored or misinterpreted. The far left constantly calls for a leaf to be taken out of her book — that a Labour government, as Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn both put it, should do for its class what Thatcher has done for hers. The clarity and/or the extremity of her positions satisfy the need of many on the left for a politics explicable in theoretical or class terms.

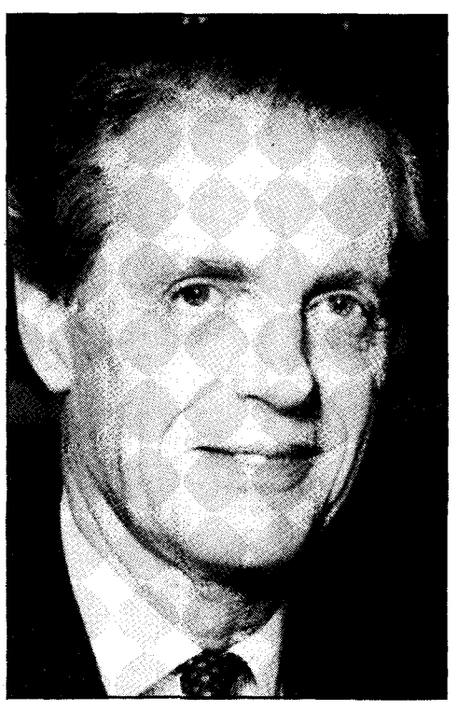
Those who hate this in their guts are the Tory 'wets'. James Prior's book, *A Balance of Power*, is a lament that Thatcher has overseen the demise of social conservatism, in at least passive collusion with the electorate. 'I failed to recognise,' writes Prior, '. . . that the mood of the country had changed during the 1970s and it was ready for a more radical move to the right than in 1970 . . . Margaret had caught the new mood. She was more in tune with the people than I was'.

Prior's book at times is an interesting narrative, occasionally revealing. But only Sir Ian Gilmour, MP for Chesham and Amersham, sacked from the first Thatcher cabinet in 1981 (where he was Lord Privy Seal, or deputy Foreign Secretary to Lord Carrington) has attempted to provide a theoretical basis to 'wetness'. In successive books — *Inside Right* (1977) and *Britain Can Work* (1983), he has excoriated Thatcherism both as a theory and as a practice.

Sir Ian, just turned 60, saw us earlier this week in his beautiful house near Syon Park, on the western fringes of London. A tall, thin man of huge charm and courtesy, he is also stunningly un-politician like: he has no apparent interest in, and scanty knowledge of, inner-party jostling and personalities: he eschews preaching to Conservatives as Michael Heseltine is presently exhausting himself doing: he shows no obvious regret for the loss of power. He is tremendously well born and is fairly rich: he inherited industrial estates in Scotland, and a share in the Meux (breweries) Trust which owns Temple Bar: he is related, at least by marriage, to such families as the Cadogans and the Buccleuchs. He went to Eton and Balliol, read for the bar (but only briefly practised), owned *The Spectator* (bought for £97,000 in 1954, sold for £74,000 in 1967) and edited it from 1954-59. He is the patrician par excellence.

At one end of his house, he has built, or renovated, a hexagonal tower lined with books, looking out on to parklands. It is an intellectual's dream room (with the only, if major, disadvantage of planes screaming down to Heathrow every 30 seconds): it *isn't* the base for an activist. Gilmour's influence (which some bold souls among the damp Tory ranks admit to) will be through his writing, not through personal advocacy linked to driving ambition.

Yet the irony is that it is the real world which he seeks to impress on all who will listen to him. Again and again in *Britain Can Work*, his



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Sir Ian Gilmour: a passion for centrism

starkest, most critical, book, he stresses the need to have regard to practicalities, to avoid ideologies like the plague. And in conversation

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doesn't have it any longer. Even before the Brighton bomb cruelly blasted the energy out of him, he was not seen as having strong managerial ability; his talent was in his political will to defeat his opponents, and even if that had not degenerated into systematic abuse, it is not a talent that most of the Conservative party is now looking for.

IF THATCHERISM had been a crusade to seize political hegemony for the far Right, and hold it in perpetuity, why has Mrs Thatcher not brought along a cadre of potential leaders? Less because she could not bear to be out-Thatchered than because, say her critics, the Tory party is, of its very nature, moderate and traditional; there were no gung-ho free marketeers to pick. She *does* also recognise talent and will prefer it ideological compliance if necessary; thus Kenneth Baker brought himself to her attention with a report on Information Technology and she hoiked him off the backbenches in response.

Fairweather friends

Given the fate of all her outspoken critics, of Sir Ian Gilmour, Francis Pym, Jim Prior, even Norman St John Stevas, this failure to reproduce herself seems surprising. But, as two backbench MPs who will never be chosen for ministerial office while she is in power said wryly, the majority of Ministers who appear to be staunch Thatcherites are only fair weather friends. They will turn as soon as there is a leader with different politics to command their loyalty.

They seem rather complacent. Like most Conservatives, they attribute political developments to the character of leaders and the baffling workings of beliefs. Even Sir Ian Gilmour, the most articulate and literate of the 'wets', speaks of 'ideology' as though it is a virus which happens to have infected a small number of Conservatives whose immune systems are deficient. They will not allow that there might profound shiftings in the relationship of class to class, of class to state, of one function of the state with another, which inevitably throw social 'harmony' out of order and produce new political forces, and beliefs.

It is the younger members, backbench MPs and Young Conservatives of both the traditionalist and libertarian wing, who question their complacency. For amongst those changes thrown up by larger social and economic shifts is change in the political party itself. Like all its rivals the Conservative Party is being pushed into a new shape and a new role.

LIKE ALL POLITICAL parties, the Conservative Party is experiencing a steady drop in membership. (They publish no figures but past officers acknowledge the decline.) The members raise less and less money. In 1984, the associations raised £977,484, 55 per cent of the target set of £1,757,133. This year, the associations raised only £944,132, 52 per cent of the set target.

In some areas, the fall in contributions is marked. In London, 18 associations raised no money at all towards the party quota, compared with only four in 1984, and the area's contribution was only 40.9 per cent of its target compared with 64.3 per cent two years ago. In the crucial West Midlands where criticism of the government's industrial policy, or lack of it, has been especially marked, the area raised only 41 per cent of its target compared with 54 per cent in 1984. The shortfall shows the same decline in all the industrial — or de-industrialised-areas. Even if no sharp political opposition has developed there, those members are most likely to feel that the government is shockingly out of touch with local feeling.

There is more than a matter of 'ideological' difference. It is also a matter of the changing form of the party. 'This Conference calls on the policy-making "top echelon" of the Party meaningfully to act in response to "grass roots" opinion, bearing in mind that bedrock support is severely disaffected' says Newark and Retford association this year. Croydon South calls more thoughtfully for a 'a clearly defined direct line of two way communication that would enable the views and concerns of active supporters at ward and constituency level to be heard by those in office' while Central Fife, from an area where party structure is teetering on disappearance, calls for 'a fundamental review' of the party structure which has 'served us well over many years' but does so no

(though he eschews personalities) he makes clear that the central critique of Thatcherism is its distance from a real world which he, and other Tories of his tradition, see themselves as staying close to.

Sir Ian does not see Thatcherism (a word, and a concept, he does not use) as reproducing itself in another figure. 'None of the intelligent people are on the right,' he says. He sees the bright young right-wing things in the Tory ranks as either opportunists or lightweights or both (he thinks one is a 'junior minister in a good year' but cannot remember his name). He sees no merit or basis in the argument that the new right are working-class/lower-middle-class radicals who are locked in inner-party class struggle with such as he. 'You can't read off social class by reference to right or left in the party. There are working-class people on the left and vice versa'.

He sees Thatcherism in quite a narrow way: not as a representative of 'new (and old) social forces' who want a less regulated, less interventionist state — but quite simply as an alien ideology, imposed from without the party's real traditions, capable of removal once the leader who espouses such doctrines is herself removed. Leadership, he says, is all in the party: 'there is no constitutional means of change below that'.

Thatcherism, he says, 'is based on a delusion that won't work. It is the consequence of an erroneous ideology, which I find distasteful . . . It makes the economic problem worse. Its great solution was a partial solution to the trade union problem.

'The doctrine of full employment was in part, and implicitly, thrown over by the previous Labour government: we threw it over explicitly with the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The rhetoric has been that employment would pick up once the barriers to it had been broken down. But in seven years, it has not done so. Yet the rhetoric goes on. If they will not change their policies, they might at least change their rhetoric'.

GILMOUR WOULD have gone quite a different route: 'I would have used the classic stabilisers which have been used since the war.' He would have sought an incomes policy from the unions, and used public investment, with private investment, to renew the manufacturing base and the public infrastructure. He does not contest the view that this is a social democratic programme, or the jest that he is to the left of David Owen. He has never felt the need to shift parties because, like an old-time Labour Party member, he feels the party has shifted while he has stayed the same.

If he has a passion, it is for centrism, for a closeness in politics between the main parties. 'I think if you have a two party system you have to have a closeness for the political health of the country. With a three party system I don't know where we are, but I think the same would apply. It depends on the economy. We got extremes because the economy didn't deliver. If the economy improved then you'd find people zooming in towards the centre again.' He has a 'very high regard' for the civil service as an institution: another of Britain's 'stabilisers'.

It is as different from the Prime Minister's view of politics as it is possible to be (it is much closer to every other party leader). James Prior recounts the story, in his book, of pointedly telling the Prime Minister that he was leaving a meeting to attend a celebration to commemorate the publication of Harold Macmillan's *Middle Way*: the Prime Minister told him that those who stand in the middle of any way tend to get knocked down.

Prior did get knocked down, so did Gilmour, so did Francis Pym, and Michael Heseltine and other, lesser wets once of great importance. The strength of the leader's position, the strength of the Leader herself, has meant that they were not able to organise — even in the 1979/81 period, when they had a majority in the Cabinet. 'Those of us in the Cabinet out of sympathy with Margaret's views grossly underestimated her absolute determination, along with Geoffrey (Howe) and Keith (Joseph) to push through the new right-wing policies', writes Prior. Indeed: the wets, gentlemen all (or mainly) simply did not take politics as seriously as Mrs Thatcher and the hot eyed Thatcherites in and out of the House of Commons, who had caught the ideology virus which Sir Ian so deplores.

Could it be, though, that he and his ilk will have the last word? That ideology is so foreign to the Conservative body politic that it cannot last and that the Party will also return to the now overcrowded centre and look for its niche there again? The next leader of the Conservative Party will not be Ian Gilmour, but it may be one who has more time for Gilmour's favourite quotation from Montesquieu — 'the spirit of moderation must be that of the legislator; the political good, like the moral good, is always to be found between two limits' — than the presents leader has. □

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longer.

In fact, it is not just that the membership and its needs have changed; the way the party actually works has been changing, but informally, towards more centralisation by Central Office. Mrs Thatcher has always used the 'top echelons' of the party to pursue her political objectives more than previous party leaders, giving the party chairmanship to high-profile political figures and even, astonishingly to many, appointing Cecil Parkinson as party chairman to the very select War Cabinet during the Falklands war.

She shifted the balance of power away from the National Union, the party structure which provided a clear hierarchical channel from constituency associations through area and regional committees to the National Executive Committee and the various national advisory committees — towards Central Office where she makes the appointments. Thus instead of the heart of the party being the social and electoral machine of the National Union — unideological, almost apolitical — it has now been transplanted into the highly political 'upper echelons' of party in parliament and Central Office on which Mrs Thatcher relies. It is their loyalty, not that of the backbenchers or even the mass of members which now protects her.

It is this which has caused mutterings amongst grass roots activists not least because Central Office under the control of party chairman Norman Tebbit is widely seen as inefficient. Norman Tebbit is not up to the job. Letters go unanswered for months, complain activists; morale inside Central Office is very low. Mrs Thatcher has attempted to shore up Mr Tebbit's weakness with more and more appointments to Central Office — such as switching Peter Morrison from the DTI to be a second Deputy Chairman. While political power remains in Central Office it has nonetheless deteriorated into being, says one National Executive member, a series of 'mini-empires'. The moderates take comfort from the fact that the fastest growing empire is under campaign director and moderate John Lacey.

THIS VITIATION of the national party structure is a development of the last six or seven years, pushed on not just by Thatcher's distinctive use of top party officials but also by the general ability of all party leaders to bypass party structures — especially if the party members are poorly organised for spreading their own political message to electors. It was always the electors rather than the members that Tory party leaders needed. These days they can speak to them direct through television, and garner their views from opinion polls. They simply do not need the cadres so much.

Until the 1970s, the mass membership of the Conservative Party was not political in the way that other parties understood the word. Its associations chose their MPs for their social standing; its full-time workers looked to the hierarchy of the National Union to offer them steady advance through regional ranks to national office. Party workers collected the dues and views of the members to pass up to the top and they filtered back down the news from the top. It was a peaceful world.

If the new intakes of MPs from 1979 and 1983 need to be supplied with a copy of *Sybil*, in the view of High Peak association, it is because they are lawyers, accountant, business consultants from the City; they have not been thrown up by the Conservative tradition; they enter the party because of the political desire to hold power. As the libertarians boast and the traditionalists concede, the free market intake have infinitely more 'networks' for scheming and discussing politics than do the wets. Precisely because they are ideological there are far more publications — most obviously from the Institute for Economic Affairs and the Adam Smith Institute, but other 'think tanks' too — produced by them, circulated through the official party bookshop and other channels than by the moderates.

The only party organisations the far right dominates are the federation of Conservative Students, the graduates' association and the Greater London association of the Young Conservatives. They are helped, financially and ideologically, by extensive links with American centres of free market thought and anti-communism. The FCS is running an expensive campaign in support of the Nicaraguan contras, for which they received support from the US-based Heritage Foundation.

Trads dominate

Most of the party organisations are still dominated by the traditionalists. The women, for example, are variously regarded as 'apolitical' — local women's associations still meet during the day and are seen as housewives' get togethers — or as firmly wet on defence and social welfare. The Young Conservatives are staunchly moderate, passing highly critical motions on apartheid and boasting, correctly, that it was their critical report on racism in the party two years ago which led to a Central Office circular warning against discriminatory racial practice within the party.

The National Union still has its vast National Executive Committee, which over 200 people are entitled to attend, representing between them about 40 area and functional organs of the party. But it plays little role in determining the affairs of the party. Conference itself allows the members no chance to shape the party. There are protests; a Charter group has pressed for years for the election of party officers and has organised for several years an unofficial ballot for party chairman. This year, Chingford (Tebbit's own) protests that 'conference should encourage more spontaneity and fuller representative involvement at conferences and we therefore call upon the Conference organisers *not* to manipulate proceedings or to stage manage debates and speakers at this or future conferences.'

The hand of manipulation remains hidden. Even a member of the Agenda sub-committee which so carefully selects the 17 motions for discussion says he's not sure how the required motions 'just emerge'.

Debating time is reserved for two motions chosen by conference ballot and usually there is some attempt to organise amongst delegates to get a significant motion chosen. This year, the right is expected to go for a debate on Ireland, in order to attack the government's Anglo-Irish agreement. The wets are much less clear about what they want.

Compared with the Right, the traditionalists have very few means for organising in the party. In parliament, they take part in a few dining clubs — the One Nation group for the older moderates, Nick's Diner or the Guy Fawkes Club (so named by the Whips because it first met on 5 November 1979). Otherwise they have only the Tory Reform Group.

Membership of the TRG is steadily increasing. But apart from a briefing document issued every six weeks or so it is not actively producing policy documents. Chairman Ian Picton says they do not have a comprehensive alternative policy and adds: 'We don't need to politically organise. We don't try to fix committee places, we actively try not to recruit MPs and we have no formal contacts with any other grouping.' While this is presumably consistent with their notion of what Conservative politics is all about it seems a remarkably ineffectual way to bid for political hegemony.

THIS IS THE flaw in the 'momentary aberration' account. Most of the traditionalists concede that the whole party, including them, has shifted because of the success of Mrs Thatcher. Where in 1979 they would have been extremely cautious about privatisation, the free enterprise culture, the pace and extent of the trade union reform, none is now opposed to the principle of these measures and few disagree with Mrs Thatcher's emphasis on them as they key elements of her strategy. They still are wholly critical of narrow monetarist measures to regulate the economy; but then it is a long time since Mrs Thatcher's supporters have heralded the triumphs of monetarism.

The key to this shift, however, is not the persuasive power of ideological arguement. It is unexpected weakness of the opposition. Traditional conservatism was moulded out of a notion of governing without seeming to govern; potential social conflicts were defused before they could become too *political* largely by transferring the conflict out of the private worker/employer relationship into some sort of state mediation. It was predicated on gauging the force of working class protest and discontent and reaching to it. Where they got it wrong and Mrs Thatcher go it right, was in their gauge of likely labour movement opposition to trade union law, unemployment, declining public services, the values of self-help.

In terms of government, this pragmatic corporatism worked until the 1970s. Then the increasing conflicts of a declining economy could no longer be contained even by a vastly expanded state. It was the rupture in that method of government which produced the new conservatism of Mrs Thatcher rather than the sudden strike of the ideology virus. Whether or not the party can fall back into its traditional Conservatism when the underlying economic conflics are hardly resolved is the key political question for the moderates. If it does, it will be because Thatcherism has 'worked' in one crucial sense; the disaffected middle class and skilled working class have been able to buy their way out of consequences of the improverished public welfare sector and of the decline in manufacturing.

If now the fear of extensive social disorder and destruction of civilised values is so extensive that Thatcherism is seen as dangerous, the traditionalists will regain their dominance of the party. But it will be on very different terms, terms laid down by the success of 'Thatcherism' is shifting the relationships of class to class and class to state. □

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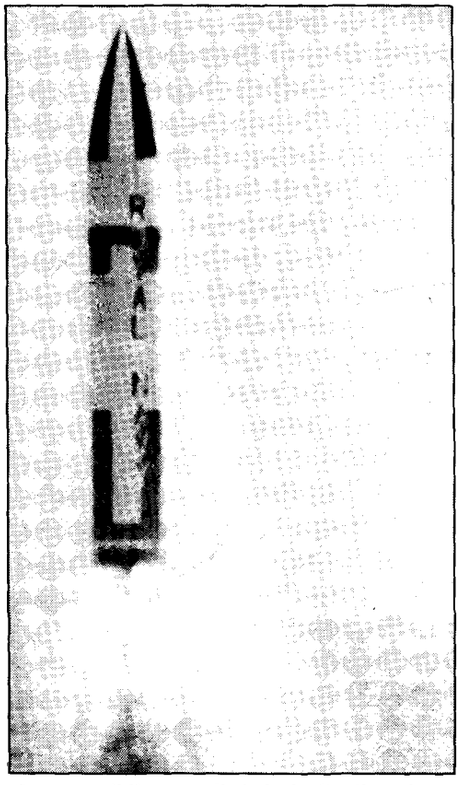
Falklands fleet put in danger

THE DEPLOYMENT of a submarine armed with Polaris nuclear missiles targeted on Argentina during the Falklands War — first revealed by the *New Statesman* two years ago — dangerously weakened the protection of the Task Force.

New evidence now available to the *New Statesman* shows that the Polaris submarine was escorted by at least two nuclear-powered submarines (known as SSNs) throughout its deployment. The evidence is in itself further



There wasn't the capacity to look after the nukes *and* our boys

confirmation of the Polaris submarine's presence, within missile range of the important military centre of Cordoba: it also reveals that the decision to threaten an ultimate nuclear strike placed the fleet in great danger.

The escorts included, at one time or another, the SSNs *Superb, Courageous* and possibly *Warspite*, the last of these hurried into service after a refit. Of the 11 SSNs in service during the Falklands War, five were deployed with the Task Force: the rest were providing 'deterrence support' for the other Polaris submarines, or were otherwise engaged.

The operation to retake the Falklands had two phases. First was the use of the Carrier Battle Group (CBG) to gain air control and 'soften up' the Argentine forces on the islands. Then came the large Amphibious Task Group (ATG) of ships which would land the troops. The CBG arrived off the Falklands at the end of April and three SSNs — *Spartan, Splendid* and *Conqueror* — were already on patrol in the area to give forward protection from Argentine navy forces.

By 7 May the Amphibious Task Group had assembled at Ascension Island and then set sail for the Falklands. By this time, though, *Sheffield* had been sunk and a Polaris submarine and two SSNs would have been moving to take up station south-west of Ascension Island.

Things then went terribly wrong for the SSN force giving forward protection in the war zone further south. *Splendid* and *Conqueror* both developed severe mechanical problems: the first withdrew and the second had limited capability. By 8 May, the entire carrier battle group had just one fully operational SSN, *Spartan*, for forward protection, with *Conqueror* providing limited back-up.

Only on 17 May did another SSN, *Valiant*, finally arrive, but with *Splendid* ineffectual this still left only three SSNs to protect the carriers and the amphibious ships in the run up to the San Carlos landings on 21 May. At no time in the whole Falklands War were five SSNs operational in the war zone — the navy simply could not protect the Polaris boat and the Task Force at the same time, and the Task Force had to take second place.

This new information supports the charge that elements within the Thatcher government were so totally committed to a military victory that they assembled the means to threaten a nuclear strike on a non-nuclear country. In war, worst-case scenarios and contingency planning can lead to dangerous conclusions, particularly with a single-minded leadership.

Paul Rogers

The Forsmark Conundrum

MR PETER WALKER likes to sit with a glass of scotch in his hand of an evening and meditate for half an hour or so, according to the *Sunday Times*. While in this contemplative state, perhaps the energy secretary would like to consider what could be called the Forsmark Conundrum. It's the least favourite nightmare of the Central Electricity Generating Board.

The Forsmark nuclear reactor in Sweden was the first place in the western world to detect the radiation cloud released by the Chernobyl accident. When workers clocked on the Monday morning following the Soviet accident, they brought radioactive dust into the plant which triggered off the alarms. Immediately the plant was evacuated while safety engineers searched frantically for a leak. It took four to five hours before the truth began to dawn: the radioactivity was coming from *elsewhere*.

A month later the southern edge of the marshy spit of land which juts out into the English Channel at Dungeness in Kent was the scene of a variant of the Forsmark Conundrum, albeit on a vastly smaller scale. The ageing Magnox reactor, known as Dungeness A, leaked a whiff of mildly radioactive gas into the atmosphere. The leak itself was not big, yet the most interesting aspect to this affair was not widely aired: it took the CEGB's engineers *three days* to discover the source of the leak in the reactor's miles and miles of intestinal pipework. ▷

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Therein lies the first part of the puzzle: reactors are so big and vast that it can take days before engineers can know definitely that they are responsible for a leak, or that something has gone wrong elsewhere. The second part of the puzzle is predicated on the chance that something *has* gone wrong elsewhere, but the foreign rotters aren't telling — as happened in Sweden.

Just 33 miles from the English coast, 10 miles east of Calais, is Gravelines, the biggest nuclear reactor park in the world, generating 5400 megawatts from six pressurised water reactors. Safety reports of the Gravelines park, obtained last week by TVS's *Facing South* team, are alarming. The plant has been dogged by a series of incidents; the most worrying, on 12 July 1984, a scary depletion of the reactor-control chemical boron which went unnoticed because reactor operators sidestepped safety procedures as they were hurrying at the end of a refuelling campaign. A good 12 hours after the incident started they caught the error. A spokesman for Electricité de France told me: 'This was an interesting incident: an example of the human factor, but nothing serious'.

A potentially disastrous near-loss-of-coolant-accident which happened at Bugey in eastern France remained hushed up for two years until revealed this year in the *Le Canard Enchaîné*. French union spokesmen at the Gravelines plant told the *Facing South* crew that during Chernobyl the radiation monitoring equipment in the plant had been 'masked' to avoid frightening the workers: Joel Beauvois, spokesman for the Gravelines CFDT union says that 'by covering up they treated the French people as little children'.

We put the Gravelines variation of the Forsmark Conundrum to Dick Pepper, the Electricity Board's senior health physicist. If there was a big leak, say at Gravelines, and you weren't informed through the right channels and you assumed it was from Dungeness, how long would it take the board to realise it *wasn't* Dungeness, it was Gravelines? Pepper: '(Long pause) I can't think of a quick positive way . . . we would have reacted as if it were ours.'

More scotch, secretary of state?

John Sweeney

Tory slump in Scotland

LAST MONTH (September) the Scottish Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind MP, wondered whether the media paid too much attention to minority viewpoints. Yes they did, came back the collective reply — far too much attention to the Conservative Party in Scotland.

The single most obvious feature of Scottish politics in recent years has been the collapse of Tory support. As former Conservative Parliamentary candidate, Michael Fry, put it: 'Mrs Thatcher has certainly changed the political geography of Scotland. She has dyed the map an even deeper red'.

Opinion polls since the beginning of the year have shown the Tories receiving between 14 and 22 per cent of the vote north of the border, compared to 28 per cent at the last general election in 1983 (see table). The latest, carried out by MORI for Scottish Television last month, shows Labour winning a massive 51 per cent of the vote, the Tories 19 per cent and the Alliance and Scottish National Party (SNP) 15 per cent each.

Voting and voting intentions in Scotland
(percentages)

	General election June '83	System 3 poll Jan '86	MORI poll Feb '86	Regional election May '86	System 3 poll Aug '86	MORI poll Sept '86
Tories	28	14	22	17	15	19
Labour	35	46	41	43	47	51
Alliance	25	22	24	15	22	15
SNP	12	17	13	18	15	15

This suggests that the Tories could lose 14 of their 21 Scottish seats at a general election, 11 to Labour and 3 to the SNP. Two Cabinet Ministers, Defence Secretary George Younger MP and Malcolm Rifkind himself, as well as one junior minister, Michael Ancram MP, would go. SDP MP Roy Jenkins would also lose his Glasgow Hillhead seat to Labour.

Tory leaders of course have been doing their best to talk up their election prospects. In a recent interview with *The Scotsman*, Malcolm Rifkind said he thought that they could win 30 per cent of the vote at the next election. To do that he would have to counter widespread disillusionment with Thatcherism (79 per cent of Scots are dissatisfied with Mrs Thatcher personally, according to a recent Gallup poll) and radically improve Scottish Tory Party morale and organisation.

To make things worse, the newly-formed Scottish Unionist Party is persisting in its intention of putting up candidates opposed to the Anglo-Irish agreement in nine Conservative marginals. The Party says it has already raised £50,000, has a shortlist of 18 possible candidates and could influence between 200,000-300,000 voters.

Its founder member, Bill McMurdo, used to be a devout member of the Conservative Party. 'We don't have any illusion that we will win any seats', he told the *NS*. 'We are out to destroy the Tory Party in Scotland.'

Rob Edwards

The ghost at the feast

IF SOCIAL ownership is what Labour is about (and Clause 4 section vi certainly says it is), then the NEC document *Social Ownership* presented to this week's Party Conference is arguably the most important statement of Labour's policy to be issued before the next election.

Produced by John Smith and David Blunkett — two of the Party's most polished performers from right and left — it sets out the policies for social ownership for 'the next Labour government and beyond'. It avers that more social ownership will give practical effect to Labour's aim of putting people first, and will create a more productive economy and a more democratic society.

The proposals for renationalising British Telecom have been widely praised for their ingenuity and innovative thinking. The document also contains proposals for remodelling public enterprise to strengthen the consumer input, increase worker participation and remould business and financial constraints on management.

Yet the authors' enthusiasm for the efficiency and democratic control of social ownership will bring a hollow laugh from many who work in or are customers of the public sector. For there is a guest at this particular feast whose presence is barely remarked in the social ownership statement. Banquo's ghost here is the past history of social ownership, and if the festive crew cannot recognise the unacknowledged presence, Lady Macbeth (or rather her modern day persona in the Prime Minister) certainly will.

Public ownership is one of the less appetising items on Labour's menu for most voters — especially the floaters whose support is so essential for a Labour victory. Those who rail at the atrocities of privatisation must ask themselves why there has been no significant popular resistance to the bargain basement sale of public services, nationalised industries and utilities.

A private poll reported in a British Telecom internal document shows that more people considered BT to be in public ownership after floatation than before. Not only is the socially owned sector of the economy seen as inefficient, unresponsive to consumer needs and offering poor service, the people of Britain largely feel that they have *less* control over it than when it is in private hands.

The voters *might* be impressed by a party that honestly admits to the shortcomings of public enterprise and promises to make what remains in social ownership as good as the best in the private sector before casting the net wider. The NEC statement on social ownership, with its shopping list of future targets and its so far largely unproven assertions about the benefits of more nationalisation, will just be an easy target come election time. ●

Nicholas Kaldor

NICHOLAS (Lord) Kaldor died on Tuesday night, aged 78. Emeritus Professor of Economics at Cambridge University when he died, he was advisor to the Wilson governments in the 1960s and 1970s. Paul Ormerod, director of the Henley Centre, says of him that 'He had a tremendously varied range, working in all sorts of areas. He emerged as a major critic of the US school of market economics: he was unusual among economists in that he did not hold that economics was a branch of the higher mathematics, but was instead an interventionist discipline. He was very policy oriented, very much liked getting his hands on policy.

'He'll be remembered for his work on the distribution of income, for his enthusiasm for devaluation, for his fierce opposition to the common market. He was also an advocate of a sales tax long before it was fashionable. He had a lively, original enquiring mind right up to his death.' ●

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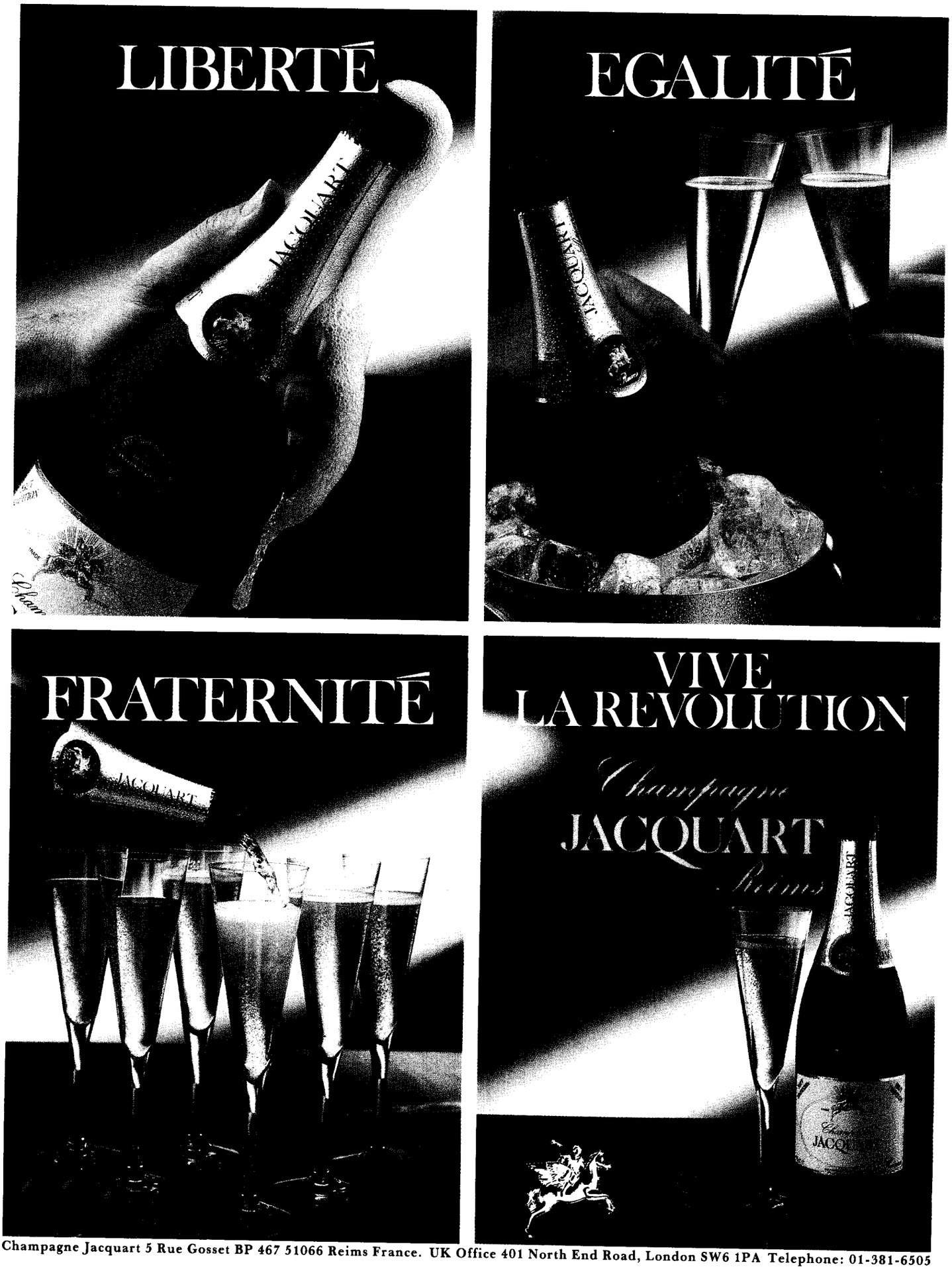

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The NATOcrats fight back

However calmly Neil Kinnock dismisses Caspar Weinberger's hawkish warnings, Labour's non-nuclear defence policy would rock NATO to its roots if followed in government. Can it be sold to the electorate? Can NATO stand the strain? **JEREMY LEGGATT reports**

IT HAS BEEN the defence of the realm, not the defence of jobs, which has dominated much of the still-unfinished party conference season. We have become aware, dimly because of halting, ill prepared and ultra-touchy presentation, that three quite distinct defence postures are being offered, in what seems to be an unmendable and unfudgeable shattering of the pro-NATO/nuclear consensus. Only the government offers that now: it will take an election to test whether that is a weakness — or a strength.

The Alliance has half offered (and half split over) a half-baked European option, which appeared to be hastily cobbled together after its leaders visited President Mitterrand last month (for some obvious problems, see box, p.16).

Labour this week presented a non-nuclear defence programme for Britain to its Blackpool conference: it did so as Caspar Weinberger, the US Secretary of Defense and Richard Perle, his assistant, both anathematised Labour for heralding the demise of NATO by doing so.

Neil Kinnock played down the changes, played up the NATO commitment. But the facts are these: Labour's plans as laid out to conference *would* rock the NATO of 1986 to its roots, for it *would* cut directly against the direction in which it is headed. It *is* an extremely radical policy, and it *would* place a huge strain on the Western Alliance. It *will* also need an awful lot of selling to an electorate hitherto supportive of NATO and of nuclear weaponry — an electorate already being softened up by the US Administration.

Caspar Weinberger submitted a plan to a NATO maritime strategy conference in June this year. In it, he argued, the time had come for NATO to expand its maritime reach far beyond its traditional European boundaries to the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, and the Gulf. He described the in-built veto on such out-of-area action in the original NATO treaty as 'an outworn geographical tag'. This was the senior partner talking.

Contrast the policy spelt out in Labour's 'Defence Conversion and Costs' statement, presented to the conference earlier this week. 'Labour will conduct an immediate review aimed at reducing and then ending out-of-area spending. Our long-term aim would be to confine the use of our armed forces outside the NATO area to disaster relief, participation in UN peacekeeping forces, and similar roles.'

Further contrasts between Labour's intentions for defence and the course on which NATO '86 is set positively leap from the pages of the policy document. An instance: NATO doctrines such as Follow On Forces Attack and Airland Battle, which involve maintaining mobile forces capable of deep strikes into the Warsaw Pact hinterland, are firmly entrenched at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe). Here, in April, officers stressed to a visiting delegation from the British Atlantic Committee the need for unpredictability as the root of deterrence and, accordingly, the need for NATO to maintain indefinitely its policy of refusing to make a no-first-use declaration.

In response to a Soviet conventional attack, the BAC visitors were told, NATO would use nuclear weapons to show the Soviets that NATO's bluff could not be called. Consultation within NATO guidelines need only take two minutes, said the ex-chair of the Nuclear Planning Group Staffs Committee. General Bernard Rogers, NATO's Supreme Commander in Europe, said in Oslo earlier this month that it was 'stupid and naive' to imagine that the Warsaw Pact countries could be deterred by assuring them that NATO would never attack them on their own territory.

Labour believes the complete opposite. 'A non-provocative *conventional* (my emphasis) defence posture for NATO in Europe will provide reassurance, enhance crisis stability, and reduce the likelihood of war.' Furthermore, 'Britain's non-nuclear military contribution to NATO should be used to help convince other NATO members (particularly West Germany) to support a No-First-Use policy . . .'; such a policy 'should seek to reassure the Soviet Union, as far as

NATO, pre-emptive first strike, and Soviet perceptions

THE US will have deployed its force of MX and Trident D-5 missiles by the mid-1990s. Top-secret 'Stealth' bombers — invisible to radar — are due to enter tests by the end of 1987. With these, Pershing II and Midgetman, some strategists believe that NATO will — in theory — be capable of obliterating two legs of the Soviet 'triad' in one blow: the silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and the long-range bombers. Which leaves the ballistic-missile submarines . . .

The US Navy plans to budget $27 billion for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) in 1987. The weapons labs are working on three varieties of ASW nuclear warhead. The Soviet Union has ten or 12 ballistic missile submarines on patrol at any one time, and to put to sea they must — no matter what Soviet port they leave from — pass through geographic 'choke' points. NATO has deployed a vast array of underwater listening devices, such as SOSUS (Sound Surveillance System), in the world's oceans, and stationed more than 400 Lockhead P-3 Orion anti-submarine aircraft around the world. The US has 97 nuclear-powered attack submarines.

Navy secretary John Lehman said in May 1985 that these submarines would attack Soviet missile subs 'in the first five minutes of the war'. Though this planning assumes an initial conventional attack by the Soviet Union, stated US strategy does not preclude the option of attempting a pre-emptive first strike on Soviet strategic missile forces.

Never mind the morality of the scheme, or the technical difficulty, or whether or not we think NATO leaders capable of executing it. The fact is that they *are* considering it — and engaging scientists energetically to bolster the technological means whereby the Pandora's box may soon be realistically openable. In this course of action, to the minds of many strategists, lies the most worrying-ever phase of the nuclear arms race. The problem lies not so much (we hope) in NATO attempting the pre-emptive first strike ahead of any hostilities, but in Soviet *perceptions* of the threat of one: what the strategists refer to as the 'use-them-or-lose-them' syndrome. In times of crisis, the effect can only be to tighten the finger on the trigger.

SDI is a further cog in this destabilising process. President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, Academician Alexandrov, expounded on Soviet perceptions of Star Wars in July to visiting western scientists in Moscow. It is not so much, he told them, the fact that SDI can work as an umbrella in the way President Reagan envisages — he is sure it cannot — but the fact that it might be partially effective, and capable of acting as a mop to deal with the residue of Soviet ICBMs to escape the first strike.

His biggest fear seemed to be internal: so small were the warning times involved that the military were being forced into developing a computerised launch-on-warning system. The implication went unspoken: that one day soon the fate of the West — indeed the world — would lie in the safe operation of a complex, and perhaps overloaded, Soviet computer system.

What of Soviet tinkering with the Pandora's box? Their lack of an open-ocean home base, and inferior global support infrastructure — to say nothing of the American lead in signal-processing of underwater sound — makes it unlikely that thoughts of successfully attacking NATO ballistic missile submarines are even on agendas in the Kremlin. Asked when giving Congressional testimony if the invulnerability of the US missile submarines would continue beyond the end of the century, Navy Secretary Lehman replied confidently, 'yes'. ●

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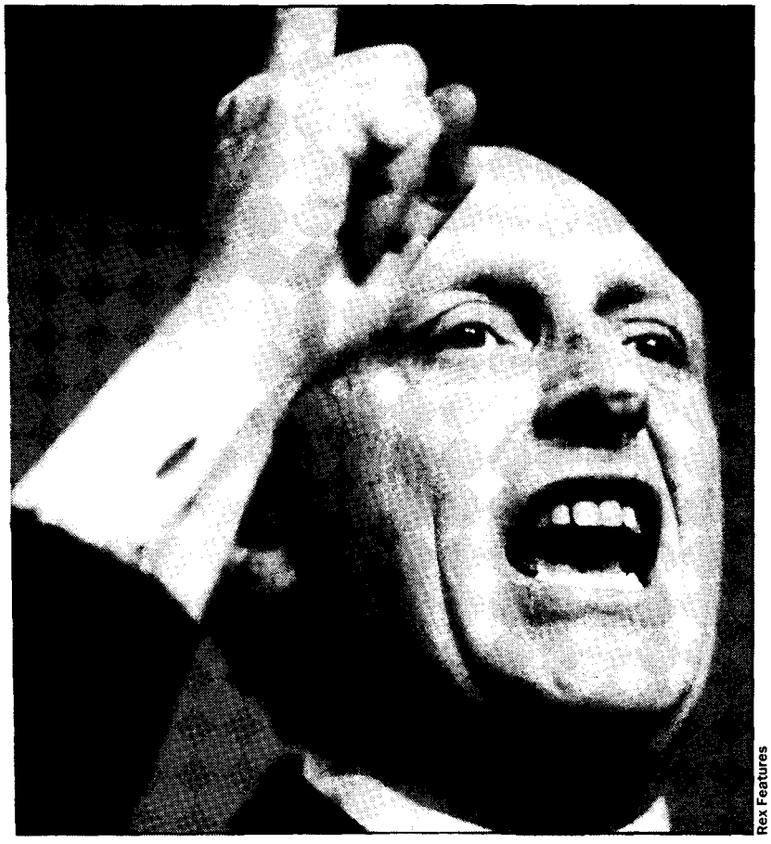
Rex Features

AP

Camera Press

'You keep your noses out of my election,' Kinnock tells Weinberger (right) and his sidekick Perle. 'Election? You mean voting, like they do in Nicaragua?'

possible, that NATO is a purely defensive alliance with no ambitions for rolling back the Soviet sphere of influence by military means'.

THE ONE aspect of NATO's current philosophy of deterrence through unpredictability which most worries the authors of the Labour document (and indeed, so I am told, many senior British Army officers) is the spectre of the pre-emptive nuclear first strike. Former US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James Watkins argued in January that the Navy's strategy calls for advanced battle groups to 'wage an aggressive campaign against all Soviet submarines, including ballistic missile submarines . . . the over-riding goal is to shoot the archer before he releases his arrows . . . thus reducing the attractiveness of nuclear escalation by changing the nuclear balance in our favour'.

Admiral Watkins seemingly believes it is possible to fight — and 'win' — a nuclear war. Evidently others in the Administration either agree, or are intrigued by the possibility: the United States is pursuing an ambitious programme of military research to improve its capabilities to ambush the archer (see box, p.14).

What does Labour think of this?: 'Plans for "strategic anti-submarine warfare" — the use of conventional forces to hunt and destroy Soviet ballistic missile armed submarines — should be abandoned as provocative and destabilising . . .'

A feature of the Reagan Administration has been the persistent rhetoric about the Soviet military build-up, and the Soviets' allegedly persistent violation of existing arms-control treaties. Much of the basis for such allegations depends on classified data from photo-reconnaissance satellites. The Labour document reveals a frustration over the NATO partners' dependence on the Pentagon for statistics: 'a Labour government will not accept uncritically interpretations of Soviet military capabilities generated by "worst case" analyses; we will instead order a thorough review of the process of threat assessment'.

Hardly thoughts which are likely to go down well with the senior partner — though in all fairness it can only blame its track record for this situation. Though the document does not cite this example, the authors will have been aware of the main allegation over which public-domain data are available: the question of Soviet nuclear testing in excess of the limit set by the Threshold Test Ban Treaty. Here Administration officials have been found wanting in accuracy — honesty, even — by an influential panel appointed by the Pentagon itself. The Labour document sticks closer to home for its rationale, referring to the Tories' annual statement on the Defence Estimates, which 'contrives to portray a large Soviet superiority in every field and downplays those areas, such as maritime, where the West has a clear lead'.

SO THERE CAN be no doubt that an incoming Labour government would send waves, not ripples, across the surface of NATO's pond — were it to follow the policies in the NEC document. And all at a time when the Alliance has been showing signs of strain as it is. General Rogers professed in August that he had 'never known as much antipathy' within NATO as had been generated by President Reagan's appeal for help with the bombing of Tripoli, and by Washington's desire not to be bound by the provisions of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II). He might have added the resentment engendered by the new generation of chemical weapons foisted on certain of the NATO partners by America's use of a 'force goal' in May.

The current trans-Atlantic polarisation is enhanced by pressure of public opinion in America, where along with national pride over Gadafy's bloody nose has grown the feeling that the junior partners in Europe are dragging their feet on a variety of security issues. This, fear the Atlanticists, could translate into Congressional pressure for greater isolation, including troop withdrawals from Europe. Americans commonly sit down to breakfast these days to headlines such as 'No-nuke Left could mean the end of NATO' (*Washington Post*, 7 September).

It seems, then, that a Labour government intent on living up to its word on defence will at once face a rather extreme question: do we risk dissolving the western alliance?

Need for reform

Senior members of the Shadow Cabinet have made clear their conviction that NATO cannot continue as it is. This is a conviction that is probably shared by many in the British armed forces. A climbdown from the threatened use of nuclear weapons in the face of a *conventional* attack is long overdue.

Most significantly a majority of the likely first Cabinet hold the belief that were Britain to cash in its own 3 per cent share of the global nuclear weapons inventory, the Superpowers might be encouraged to begin the process of reducing their 95 per cent share; and in the American case — knowing that Oxfordshire was no longer stocked with F1-11s, Salisbury Plain no longer bedecked with cruise missiles — discouraged from the temptation of trying to negotiate from strength. Moreover, the party is led by a man whose convictions about nuclear weapons make it more likely that he will not shirk from attempting to tread the non-nuclear path in the way his predecessors did.

But the Reagan Administration is belligerent and prone to isolationism. It has also been effective in persuading most of its people that the

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Russians are still ahead in the nuclear arms race, and are intent on exploiting an American 'window of vulnerability', despite massive evidence to the contrary. Faced with an Administration not above threatening to remove its allegiance from Europe if Britain doesn't toe the escalatory line, it's in Labour's long-term interest to find ways of softening the shock. American NATO-crats used to British officials on a Thatcher brief and members of Congress looking for signs of 'backbone' in the European partners may be pleased to note that the NEC's document points to a means of achieving this: *through conventional defence.*

Labour's aim is to bring the 5.2 per cent of UK national income currently allocated to defence down towards the average of our main European allies in NATO (3.4-3.6 per cent). But: 'if NATO is to move to a non-nuclear policy this will require adequate, modern, effective, conventional forces . . . this could not be achieved in the lifetime of a single parliament without major cuts in our conventional forces, which we do not recommend'. There is also instructive reference to Falklands expenditure, where in '85/86 over £800 million was 'diverted away from NATO'.

Labour anticipates coming to power when the peak years of Trident spending — from 1987 to 1993 — will just be beginning. Most of the £10 bn budget can be saved, hoped the NEC, to be 'released for other purposes'. Nowhere is the policy document quite as specific as was Denzil Davies, shadow defence minister, during this year's Defence Estimates debate: 'We believe that the money saved by cancelling Trident should be used for non-nuclear defence', he said. 'It should be used to maintain and preserve existing commitments.' Specifically, and critically, 'it should be used also to strengthen our conventional defences in NATO . . .'

As a result of the high costs of Trident and the 'Fortress Falklands' policy, the Tories plan, as things stand, to cut by around 20 per cent non-nuclear defence equipment purchasing and maintenance over the next three years. Were conventional defence expenditure actually to *rise* for the first few years under Labour it could be that senior British officers will be moved to argue the case for change within NATO with conviction, and that American public opinion would prove persuadable that Britain was not simply lying down in anticipation of the arrival of the jackbooted troops of the Evil Empire.

A changed electorate?

Kinnock's Labour Party has an opportunity in 1986 which was not available to Foot's in 1983: a public more *aware* of the nuclear weapons debate. Two factors are responsible for this: the disaster at Chernobyl and the raid on Libya. A recent opinion poll shows that well over 40 per cent of the population now favour independent nuclear disarmament by Britain. An additional advantage for Labour is the division which has emerged in the Liberal/SDP Alliance over defence, coupled with the fact — even if the two Davids succeed in subduing the Liberal dissidents — that the 'Eurobomb' seems to have little appeal either to the British public or to the French.

Chernobyl has undermined NATO's case that early use of nuclear weapons is an adequate substitute for strengthened conventional defence. Fewer people will now be able to accept that the NATO plan to use weapons of up to 1 megaton (70 times the size of the Hiroshima bomb) behind the lines in East Germany is a *credible* defence strategy in the event of a conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact. Radiation — even from a single bomb — would manifestly not respect bloc boundaries. Worse, such use might lead to rapid escalation and a full exchange: tantamount to suicide.

The arguments will have to be a little more involved than the ones we heard on Monday's *Panorama*, though. Neil Kinnock allowed himself to be bogged down in the question of whether minimum deterrence does or does not work. Denis Healey offered a thin argument: that Gorbachev had volunteered a concomitant force reduction if Labour decommissions Polaris. (The Russians would be still capable of a blanket nuclear attack on Britain, even if they did: David Owen spelt that out with glee.) Neither issue is now paramount.

Caspar Weinberger said he could see no benefit to Britain if American nuclear weapons are expelled. He offered portentious comments about the collapse of NATO. Nobody pointed out to him that the alliance survived France's expulsion of both nuclear *and* conventional bases in the 1960s.

Both Mrs Thatcher and George Younger offered the old idea that our bombs have kept the peace for 40 years. Nobody pointed out the fact that former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had on Sunday described NATO's threat of early use as suicidal, and therefore no defence at all.

Throughout the *Panorama* programme, the Labour front bench was on the defensive. If Labour is to win this debate, it must go on the *offensive*. Labour has the scope to win this argument, and turn defence to a vote-winner. But if this is to be done, the debate must be opened — with enthusiasm and resolve to deploy the technical side of the case — well in advance of the election. And arguments will have to be sold on both sides of the Atlantic. □

NATO and 'out-of-area' commitments

ONE of the most divisive issues in the Western Alliance currently is the contrasting attitude to the sphere of joint operations. America stresses the need to police the world. European partners are preoccupied with Europe. This is a factor likely to be much exacerbated under a future Labour government.

The highest military priority for the United States, according to an internal Defense Guideline paper circulated in Washington in the winter of 1983/84, 'is the defense of North America . . . followed by NATO areas and lines of communication leading thereto'. 'American actions in other parts of the world will protect essential American interests, exploit Soviet vulnerability and divert Soviet attention and forces from Europe and south-west Asia'.

The attempt to embroil NATO partners in fulfilling these aspirations is already in train. The recent RIMPAC exercise in the western Pacific involved the largest naval force to assemble in the Pacific since World War II: as well as the US Navy, it included British, Canadian and Australian ships. Critics claim that the exercise was to simulate a naval attack on Soviet strategic submarine bases on the Kamchatka peninsula.

Under the Tories, British out-of-area capabilities have increased. Ships are now permanently stationed in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic. An army airborne brigade has been specially assigned as a 'rapid deployment force'. A new UK command has been set up to co-ordinate future joint out-of-area operations ●

The Euro option

A EUROPEAN defensive alliance has been mooted since the war: of all British political leaders, Edward Heath was the most attracted, the least in thrall to the US. David Steel and David Owen thus follow in a well-worn path. But it is a rocky one.

Lawrence Freedman, Professor of War Studies at King's College London, has totted up some of the problems. They are:

- The need to defend the West German border can't be solved by developing a German bomb — still regarded as 'one of the most destabilising developments imaginable'.
- A collective West European nuclear force would mean a host of presently non-nuclear countries having a veto over the finger on the button, thus making it incredible.
- A Franco-British nuclear force would, if combined at present strength, be tiny. And would it be any more likely to come to the defence of West Germany than the US?
- If there were to be such a force, would the UK leave NATO? Or would France join it?
- The bulk of French nuclear weaponry is French: the British delivery vehicle for Polaris, and for Trident, is American. If Britain were to adopt the French submarine launched missiles, the adaptation costs could make them *more* expensive than buying Trident.

Freedman's comment is that 'A more visible and vigorous effort to develop European nuclear capabilities, in whatever form, could not but be seen as a loss of confidence in the US guarantee. This could become self-fulfilling. There are already signs of of reluctance in the US to offer nuclear protection to Europe. Could we still rely on the Soviet Union to take the US commitment seriously when nobody else did? There is little point in undermining a half convincing American bluff — only to replace it with an unconvincing and provocative bluff of our own'.

Dr Owen, speaking earlier this week on Channel Four's *Defending Europe*, said that France and the UK, with memories of Hitler and shamed by appeasement, *would* be keener to respond to Soviet aggression than the US. But he fell back on saying that it was all 'very difficult' and that he didn't want the US to pull out. ●

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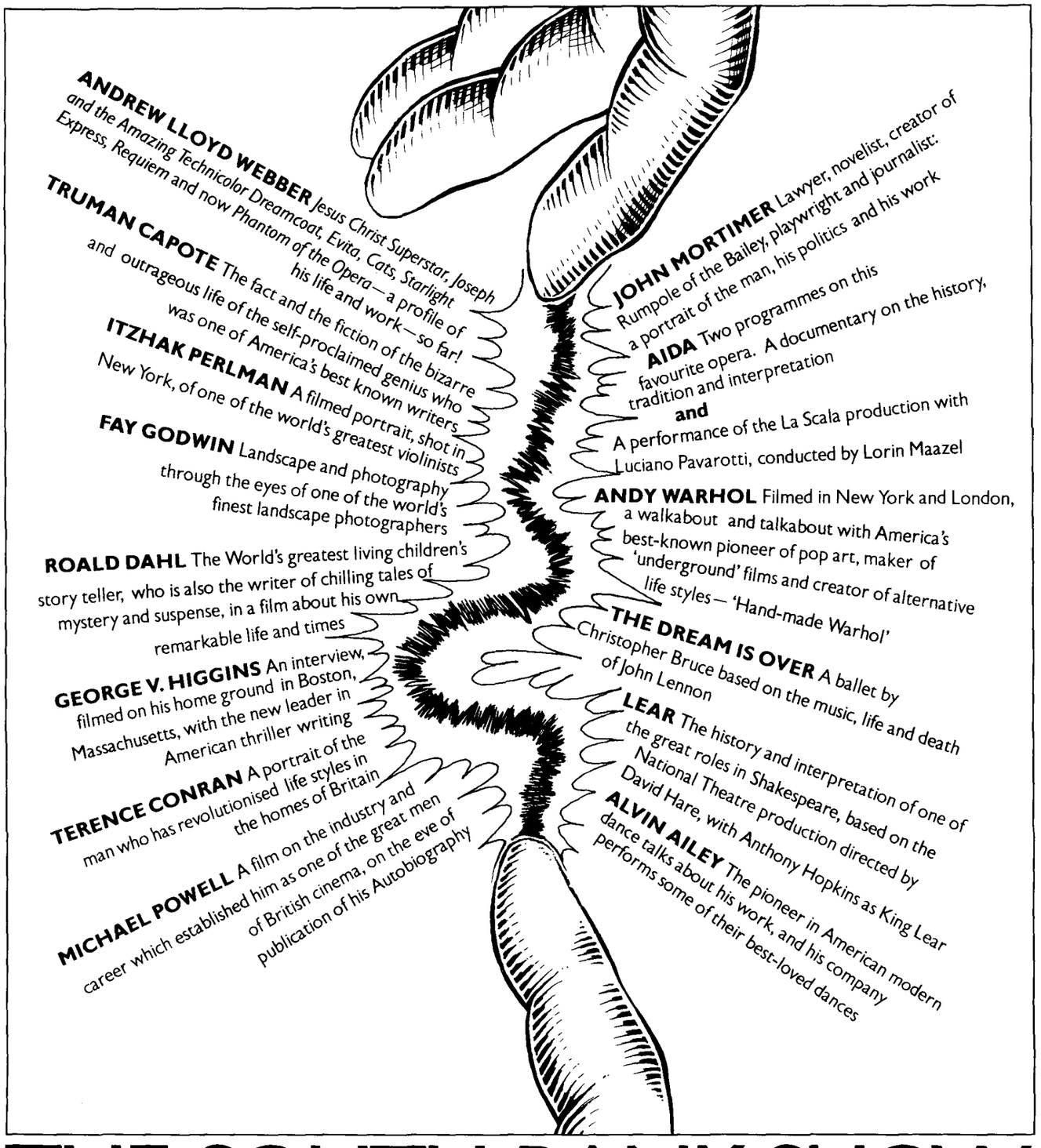
Some of the programmes scheduled for the 1986/87 season, starting this Sunday


ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER Jesus Christ Superstar, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, Evita, Cats, Starlight Express, Requiem and now Phantom of the Opera—a profile of his life and work—so far!
TRUMAN CAPOTE The fact and the fiction of the bizarre and outrageous life of the self-proclaimed genius who was one of America's best known writers
ITZHAK PERLMAN A filmed portrait, shot in New York, of one of the world's greatest violinists
FAY GODWIN Landscape and photography through the eyes of one of the world's finest landscape photographers
ROALD DAHL The World's greatest living children's story teller, who is also the writer of chilling tales of mystery and suspense, in a film about his own remarkable life and times
GEORGE V. HIGGINS An interview, filmed on his home ground in Boston, Massachusetts, with the new leader in American thriller writing
TERENCE CONRAN A portrait of the man who has revolutionised life styles in the homes of Britain
MICHAEL POWELL A film on the industry and career which established him as one of the great men of British cinema, on the eve of publication of his Autobiography
JOHN MORTIMER Lawyer, novelist, creator of Rumpole of the Bailey, playwright and journalist: a portrait of the man, his politics and his work
AIDA Two programmes on this favourite opera. A documentary on the history, tradition and interpretation
and
A performance of the La Scala production with Luciano Pavarotti, conducted by Lorin Maazel
ANDY WARHOL Filmed in New York and London, a walkabout and talkabout with America's best-known pioneer of pop art, maker of 'underground' films and creator of alternative life styles—'Hand-made Warhol'
THE DREAM IS OVER A ballet by Christopher Bruce based on the music, life and death of John Lennon
LEAR The history and interpretation of one of the great roles in Shakespeare, based on the National Theatre production directed by David Hare, with Anthony Hopkins as King Lear
ALVIN AILEY The pioneer in American modern dance talks about his work, and his company performs some of their best-loved dances

THE SOUTH BANK SHOW

EDITED AND PRESENTED BY MELVYN BRAGG

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The upper and the nether millstones

The 1984/85 miners' strike is now being reassessed, 18 months after its ending in March 1985. The most important view comes from Ian MacGregor, the chairman of the National Coal Board throughout the dispute. MacGregor is bitterly critical of his political master, Energy Secretary Peter Walker — and of his own executives. Below, we report on the reaction of one of those bitterly criticised executives,* NED SMITH. *On the facing page,* KIM HOWELLS, *research officer for the South Wales NUM, describes the state of his union — and reviews* The Miners' Strike: Loss Without Limit, *by Martin Adeney and John Lloyd (the* NS *editor)

IAN MACGREGOR'S history* of the 1984/85 mineworkers' strike is a morality play. The strike is seen as a victory of good over evil, of light over darkness, of progress over reaction. Arthur Scargill is Lucifer, of course, which leaves a self-evident role for the former chairman. But there are many legions of devils, not all of them in Scargill's camp: in order to accomplish final victory, MacGregor first had to purge his own armies of faint hearts and traitors.

Among the chief of these was Ned Smith, director general of industrial relations, who had risen to the job from the Kent pit where he had been a faceworker. Smith 'resented my whole style of management. The idea that the chairman should simply say what was going to happen was clearly alien to his . . . culture'. He and MacGregor were 'polar opposites'. His loyalty to the National Coal Board 'did not extend to me personally . . . (he) had a rather supercilious attitude . . . he thought many of the things I suggested would cause trouble, and his naturally establishment mind had been developed in a culture trained to avoid aggressive confrontation'.

Smith retired from the Board early in 1985, having offered his resignation the previous September and been persuaded back by the government to help solve the deputies dispute. He now lives in Kent, and has himself written an account of the strike. He is a tall man with a mane of white hair, a battered face and a drawling, cultured voice. He thought his former chairman's account of the strike a travesty, and in a conversation with the *NS* earlier this week, he told us why.

Smith confirms the view many take of MacGregor: that he is *himself* not a man who relishes confrontation; indeed, that he often goes out of his way to convey a favourable impression to someone whom he privately despises. Says Smith: 'MacGregor constantly showered me with praise. When I left the Board he offered me a job. He gave a speech at my leaving party, where 90 per cent of Hobart House (NCB headquarters) came, saying I had done a fantastic job.'

A few days before MacGregor moved from the British Steel Corporation to the NCB (on 1 September 1983) he dined with Smith, Norman Siddall, the retiring chairman and James Cowan, the deputy chairman. He told the three NCB executives that he had read the Board's annual reports, the recently completed (and critical) Monopolies and Mergers Commission report on the NCB: and the Commons select committee on the coal industry. His reading of these documents, and his briefing by Siddall, had convinced him the Board's policies were right and he would follow them. MacGregor writes in *The Enemies Within* of the Board 'approaching disaster', and remarks with pride that the government did not turn to any of the old boy network to fill what would have been a very hot seat for anyone. Yet, as Smith says, MacGregor barely recognises the year-long chairmanship of Norman Siddall (he mentions, briefly, that Siddall closed 20 pits). In fact, says Smith, the government 'begged Norman to say — but he would not, because his doctors had warned him of heart trouble'.

SMITH COMPLETELY dismisses the suggestions in MacGregor's book that Scargill was pulled on to the punch by a cunning chairman: he says that the flurry of strikes in South Yorkshire, and the decision to close the South Yorks pit of Cortonwood, were both 'inadvertent':

> The South Yorkshire strikes were often aimed, in fact, against the NUM itself, because of widespread dissatisfaction over the overtime ban. And the closure of Cortonwood was done because the relevant Board member [Merrik Spanton, Board member for personnel] did not warn George Hayes, the area director, off doing it. I think Arthur Scargill had the strike shoved up his jersey — instead of kicking for touch, as any sensible leader would have done, he ran with it. But it wasn't MacGregor's skill that made him do so.

MacGregor several times accuses NCB officials of leaking information: he says, for example, that 'it became my experience very quickly that if more than two or three people knew about any decision which had been taken, then so, very quickly, did Arthur Scargill or the media or both'. Smith denies this: and turns the charge on MacGregor.

He points to an interview in *The Times* on 12 June arranged, he said, by the chairman's office: it was given in the middle of negotiations which Smith believed were going well, and it wholly destroyed them. Again, on 14 September, the two sides (Smith believes) were within an inch of settlement, and *The Times* carried a text of the proposed settlement with a pejorative commentary. Smith sees a link between MacGregor's office and that of the then *Times* editor, the late Charles Douglas Home: the link man, he believes, was David Hart, the chairman's confidant, fixer and occasional *Times* journalist.

Non-ferrous chairman

He was not, says Smith, the man of steel which emerges from the book. In the early months of the strike, he had to be restrained by Smith and others from giving away too much. On 17 April, at a meeting of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee, MacGregor remarked to representatives of the two management unions (the NUM had withdrawn from all joint committees) that he would be willing to rephase the planned closures of the pits which were marked to be shut. 'It came right out of the blue: I nearly fell out of my chair: so did Jimmy Cowan. Yet he refers to it in the book as though it had been agreed policy between us'.

MacGregor stresses the hostility to him within the Board: only Cowan, he writes, could be trusted: and when Hart and Tim Bell, then at Saatchi and Saatchi, came in to help him on strategy and publicity, they were essential because of the lack of support from people like Smith and the late Geoff Kirk, then head of the public relations (who was 'retired' towards the end of October).

Smith concedes that he and other executives were against his appointment, and said so to government: but once in, he says MacGregor could have achieved total support had he asked for it. 'He was portrayed by Scargill as the butcher of

The Enemies Within: the story of the miners' strike '84-5, Collins, £15.

'And ever more came out of that same door wherein I went' . . .

This was the plaint of a man who could not escape the common round of conventional answers to his questions. Perhaps he was stuck in beliefs — maybe even sacred ones — but he was stuck. Is there no way out?

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the steel industry: that was untrue, the closure plan had been drawn up and had begun to be implemented by Charles Villiers (the previous BSC chairman). His reputation added to our problems in the coalfields, of course, but it was one we were dealing with.'

There can be no reconcilation in the views of Smith and MacGregor: it is a classic and extreme case of two men living through the same events and both genuinely believing the other has, at best, wholly misrepresented or misunderstood what was happening (actually, both go further, and accuse the other of bad faith and worse). On MacGregor's side, his criticisms of the Hobart House bureaucracy were generally shared in government and had been for years. Derek (now Lord) Ezra was seen, certainly by Tory energy ministers, as a block on their drive to return the industry to profit.

But Siddall had marked the break with Ezra: he too, with many of his top managers, had chafed over the Ezra years of inaction. Siddall was seen by government as the perfect chairman, and ministers as differing in their views as Peter Walker and Norman Tebbit were keen for him to stay. There is little question that the events leading up to the strike were confused, contradictory, and simply not capable of being manipulated by the Board so that a strike began on cue.

It is probably impossible to know with real accuracy what MacGregor's motives and tactics were: his is a complex character, much more freewheeling and capricious than the normal state company chairman, the style of a loner, an habitual courtesy masking arrogance and a sense of personal and professional rectitude. It was because he was such an extraordinary character, and because he faced another in Arthur Scargill, that the strike came to be seen as a head-on clash between them — not unnaturally. Smith and others, with a lifetime of defusing conflict behind them, hated both sides. But they were ground between the millstones. □

Dispelling bad myths

THE MINERS' strike left a mess behind. But not one big enough to prevent the rest of the labour movement from driving around it, like motorists around a fatal pile-up, gawping at the carnage with a mixture of horrid fascination and relief that it isn't them lying there, mangled.

Inside that movement, the end of the strike provoked only an increased reluctance to analyse and criticise the nature of the dispute and the tactics used to prosecute it. It gave Eric Hammond the opportunity to drive home his cheap, but effective, 'lions led by donkeys' jibe at the 1985 Labour Party conference and emphasised, once again, that there is no substitute for serious analysis and debate. As one former NUM leader put it: 'If you don't know where you've come from, how can you know where you're going to?'

By its very nature, a democratic trade union movement cannot be secret, nor can it conduct itself as some kind of private state within a state or act as if it were hiding perpetually from the Czar's troops up a Petrograd alleyway.

If the movement is to produce the kind of dynamic initiatives required of it in the late 1980s then it has no choice but to encourage open participation, debate and analysis. The days of the Big Fix, left or right, are drawing to an end. Secret electoral deals to secure the passage of conference resolutions; spurious debts of 'political' loyalties among cabals of leaders; convenient silences or orchestrated outbursts: all of these have been part of the staple diet of the labour movement until now. The result is hardened arteries, clogged veins, breathlessness and an acute loss of clout.

It is not that the language of class welfare is now irrelevant, so much as the fact that it is incomprehensible to most trade unionists and to public at large — as, indeed, are many of the Holy Causes and Glorious Moments in Our History which generate this blather in the first place.

Saltley Gates and the victories of the early '70s, for example, were romanticised in 1984-85 by people who should have known better: romanticised in much the same way as British generals harked back to the glories of the Boer War when they were floundering in the mud at Ypres. Tragically, like the high commands of so many other campaigns, they were fighting an earlier war, discovering only during retreat and dismemberment that the world had changed.

FORTUNATELY, nature abhors a vacuum. The lack of analysis from within the movement has partially been filled by a number of publications on the strike: among the latest is *The Miners Strike: Loss Without Limit* by Martin Adeney and John Lloyd.*

It is a fine book: elegantly-written, lively, refreshingly unsentimental and, no doubt, certain to become the target of a shower of arrows from the advocates of silence. It's a fitting rejoinder to MacGregor's dramatised documentary, *The Enemies Within*. It has a curious, but highly effective, structure in as much as it delays, until its final chapter, dealing with the significance of the parallels (so often drawn in 1984-85) with the events of 1926.

Adeney and Lloyd use the comparison with 1926 as an effective device for placing the events of 1984-85 against the canvas of contemporary industrial and political change. Indeed, they are right to imply that the canvas itself and the wedges which stretch it were constructed in part from the very material of the strike and its bitter aftermath.

For, in the 18 months since the ending of the strike, and with no great fanfare, British Coal (as it now refers to itself) launched a nationwide campaign under MacGregor's chairmanship to persuade miners that the NUM is a hindrance (or at best an irrelevance) to the attainment of improved wages and conditions. It was a conscious attempt to 'Americanise' industrial relations in mining.

No magnaminity

Certain common themes are being stressed by BC at coalfield meetings. Dozens of miners' earholes have found themselves bent by managers droning on about their fact-finding trips to coal mines in the USA. An endless dirge is intoned about imported coal/oil threatening the lives of remaining pits; the 'benevolence' of BC management in securing investment in the industry and improved working conditions; the 'availability' of equal (or better) pay rates and benefits at non-NUM workplaces.

At colliery level, there has been a tendency during this period for managers to withdraw many of the facilities previously available to NUM officials to carry out union business. Reports circulate of managerial harassment of officials and there has been a generally systematic refusal by management to retreat from its hard-line against re-employing sacked miners.

All of these tactics have been backed by a kind of 'intelligence' network, based mainly on regular reports to area directorates from middle and lower management (the kind of snooping which depends for its success on the willing co-operation of the TUC-affiliated NACODS and BACM unions) and on a series of surveys carried out in certain coalfields by MacGregor's old pal Tommy Thompson and his Opinion Research and Communication organisation.

Meanwhile, the industry has witnessed some extraordinary changes in its marketing position, post-strike. Coal demand has been artificially inflated as a result of the CEGB's decision to rebuild power station stockpiles depleted during 1984-85. It is likely to remain at somewhere between 80 million tonnes (mt) and 90 mt, mainly because of the five year coal-supply contract signed by BC and the CEGB early in the Summer.

IN THE AUTUMN of 1986, as the government's electoral prospects diminish, there is much talk of the 'problem' of presentation of policy and of the need to be seen as a 'caring' party. They are changing their image, favouring a pinker hue for the heavenly tableaux they're constructing behind the embalmed features of their glorious, stern leader.

A new Coal Board chairman has been appointed as part of this process. He's already taken his place on the centre-right of the stage, within head-patting distance of the Prime Minister. His autumn initiative on wages, however, has achieved little so far, save to provoke hostility and resentment from miners who tend, already, to regard him as not much more than a cosmetically adjusted MacGregor clone.

A limited overtime ban in South Wales has detonated small ignitions in other coalfields. The men are bitter, disillusioned and fed-up. They are demanding a just reward for having dragged the industry up from its knees since the strike. The last thing they want is a screen drawn across their backs on which will be projected idealised images of their heroism and resolve during the strike. Nor do they wish to be serenaded by the inane optimism of voices proclaiming 1984-85 as the 'greatest victory of the British working class'.

Hopefully, Adeney's and Lloyd's book will help to silence that muzak and wind back the screen to that pseudo-socialist Disneyland where it belongs. The men and women of the coalfields never stopped debating the strike, from the moment it began. It is those who consider themselves the revolutionary tribunes of the people who maintain a pompous silence, like chief mourners at a funeral.

Let them remember, as they read this book, that the NUM is not one man and his reputation; nor is it some kind of precious icon to be contemplated in various stages of reverence. It is an organisation of 100,000 souls; a bit mangled maybe, but ready yet to spit in the eye of those who, out of malice or compassion, would like to bury it. □

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* Published by Routledge, £14.95.

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MEDIA

The case of the visible spokesman: the Lobby reforms itself

Peter Hennessy

'OH DEAR', said the senior Whitehall figure on hearing of the *Guardian's* letter to No. 10 announcing its intention of busting the Lobby system, 'Bernard will make it a frightful personality issue. He'll go round like an injured lion'. 'Bernard' needs no introduction. No history of the Thatcher years will be complete without an assessment of the Ingham factor. Never has a Downing Street Press Secretary been more persistently or controversially in the limelight. This is not a happy position for the clandestine daily briefer of the 'secret service' of the Fourth Estate as Mrs Thatcher described the Lobby in a speech which bore unmistakable traces of the Ingham spoor delivered during the Lobby's centenary lunch at the Savoy Hotel in 1984. (I still can't decide whether her congratulations on 'a successful 100 years in pursuit of press freedom' was a near unique example of Thatcher irony — I suspect not.)

Peter Preston, the *Guardian's* editor, has loathed the Lobby for years but felt he could not pull out unless his political journalists supported withdrawal. At last they have fallen into line with Preston's wishes including the veteran Ian Aitken who has been sceptical in the past. Preston tried to engineer a concerted Lobby withdrawal involving the *Guardian, The Times,* and the *Daily Telegraph*. In the summer he summoned a private breakfast meeting of fellow editors. Charlie Wilson of *The Times* showed scant interest in reform (Rupert Murdoch dismissed the idea of a Lobby pull-out in September 1981 six months after buying the paper). Max Hastings seemed the most promising ally. I can remember him at the Oxford Union, dazzling in a plum coloured smoking jacket, rubbishing the Lobby and all its works during a debate in its centenary year. Last week, the *Telegraph*, in Hastings' words, was still 'considering our position'. Preston's attempt at concerted action had failed.

Fleet Street is an ungenerous place. Nowhere in its rich coverage of its desire to force reform upon the barnacled hulk of British political journalism did the *Guardian* acknowledge the scouring effect of Andreas Whittam-Smith's *Independent* before a single issue of the new quality daily had reached the news stands. Whittam-Smith and his Political Editor, Tony Bevins (a refugee from *The Times*), breathed as one on this issue from the start. The *Independent* would simply keep out of the Lobby and have no part in the daily, non-attributable mass briefings of political correspondents which successive occupants of No 10 have used to set and dominate the agenda of British politics week in week out.

Bevins is a possessed soul, a scouser who sandpapers his rough edges not to smooth them down but to keep them raw. I've been devoted to Bevins for a decade since we shared a cramped, tatty office in the Lobby Corridor high up in the Palace of Westminster when he was on the *Mail* and I was with the *Financial Times*. I'd arrive just before lunch and he'd look up with a mad gleam in his eye, wave some obscure Public Accounts Committee report on MoD overspending on frigates and roar 'I've got the bastards this time!' Though the son of a Tory Postmaster General (Reggie Bevins, author of *The Greasy Pole*) Tony hates the Establishment in all its forms, including the staider members of the Lobby Committee. 'Bernard's Brownies' he calls them.

In turn, they talk of the 'Bevins Factor', how the cause of reform is not helped by the fact that *he* is pushing it. Bevins has been getting up their nostrils all summer. An acrimonious exchange in the *UK Press Gazette* with Peter Simmonds, Political Editor of the *Mail on Sunday*, pushed Simmonds into a choice piece of hyperbole. Recalling a 'senior lobby correspondent' talking over tea in 1976 when Joe Haines, Harold Wilson's Press Secretary, temporarily closed down Lobby briefings and musing 'The Lobby will be around long after Joe Haines, Harold Wilson and I have gone', Simmonds wrote 'I'm pretty sure that the Lobby will be around long after I, too, have gone'.

SIMMONDS IS like a lifer pining for Dartmoor, but he could be right. Ingham's anonymous empire built on the principle of institutionalised collusion may, thanks to the *Independent* and the *Guardian*, be entering its equivalent of the Suez crisis (Bevins as Nasser, Preston as Eisenhower? the metaphor is getting out of hand!) But the Lobby pull-out by the two qualities could turn out to be an historical rather than an historic event, to use a distinction favoured by Professor Sammy Finer. The next three weeks may be crucial.

The Lobby Committee was planning to meet in Blackpool this week. Its chairperson, Julia Langdon of the *Mirror*, believes 'the time for reform has come'. The respected Peter Riddell of the *Financial Times* will probably carry the day by pushing his 'Fabian' solution — to negotiate away, bit by bit, the non-attribution protecting the No 10 briefing which allows Ingham to steer the hacks this way and that, and to rubbish individual ministers who have lost favour with the Lady without the source of the steering or the rubbishing being made plain. But will Ingham negotiate? Probably not. He would have no truck two years ago with the Lobby's attempt to clean up its act by making attribution the norm (Kinnock, Owen and Steel have been largely on-the-record at their weekly Lobby briefings since then).

> ***'Fleet St is an ungenerous place. Nowhere in its rich coverage of its own desire to reform the barnacled hulk of British political journalism did the* Guardian *acknowledge the scouring effect of the* Independent*'***

If Ingham persists in playing the wounded lion till parliament reassembles, the *Guardian* men, led by Jim Naughtie, are going to force the issue. They will turn up to Bernard's first briefing and announce their intention of attributing what he says to a 'Downing Street spokesman'. Bernard, no doubt wonderfully choleric, will withdraw. The expectation then is that he would form a 'White Commonwealth' of trusties excluding the *Guardian* (the *Independent* won't be at the meeting but, no doubt, will gleefully report it). The spotlight will then move to Max Hastings and his political correspondent, George Johns. If the *Telegraph* follows its editor's instincts it will have nothing to do with any 'White Commonwealth' and the great anti-Lobby alliance will be up to three. If Peter Riddell puts virtue above caution (a big 'if'; Riddell thinks the fuss is vastly overdone, though he is determined to stop the Lobby Committee expelling the *Guardian*) and the *FT* pulls out, the system will be bust. What *The Times* and the pops do then will be irrelevant.

QUITE APART from the disintegration of his Brownie pack, poor Ingham is about to have a bag of manure opened above his head by Jim Prior, a former cabinet minister with no love at all for Bernard's Downing Street news machine. In his volume of memoirs, *A Balance of Power* to be published on Monday, Prior recalls Ingham's past as a Labour candidate in a council election and adds: 'I cannot help feeling, though, that he was another of the left, like Paul Johnson, who, having decided to change sides, has moved right across the political spectrum. However, he certainly did not qualify as an intellectual — he was more in the mould of a political bruiser'.

For good measure, Prior recounts another episode in his bumpy relationship with No 10. Leaving Downing Street after a peace mission with Mrs Thatcher, he says to the Prime Minister: 'I know you think I leak things to the press, and yes, I sometimes do, deliberately at times and by mistake on others. But, of course, so do you'.

'Oh no, Jim, I never leak'.

'Well, if you tell me that, I must accept it, but in that case your officials and press people certainly leak for you.'

'Oh, that is quite wrong; they never know anything, so how could they leak?'

Bernard's views on that exchange would be a collector's item.

Back to the future, and to the battles for the lobby: the most likely outcome is that only the *Independent* and the *Guardian* will turn off the daily drip-feed from No 10. The others will stay in the club *pro tem*. But if the *Independent* and the *Guardian* can show, as I'm sure they will (both have superb political teams and much digging-power), that life is possible, even glorious, outside the the Lobby, the system *will* crumble when there's a change of government and Bernard goes off to write his memoir on how dreadfully he was misunderstood and what hypocritical rats the Lobby-bashers are. Ingham as the Lobby's Anthony Eden. The prospect is irresistible. □

Peter Hennessy is co-author of Sources Close to the Prime Minister, *Papermac, £4.95.*

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CRUSTY BYWAYS

Ports of entry

FOR THE BENEFIT of all those unhappy with Labour Conference support for 'witch-hunts' and who think a Kinnock Labour government will be 'no different from the Tories, etc etc', we are examining entrist opportunities in the Party of the Nation and the Blue Rinse.

However, it's not just sharp hatpins you'll have to look out for; a close re-reading of that seminal entrist work *Alice in Wonderland* will be necessary. In 1980, Conservative Central Office fought and won a case against the Inland Revenue by proving that in a strictly legal sense the Conservative Party doesn't exist, at least for payment of Corporation Tax.

Mrs T's megalomania may well have had theological blessing from the judge's ruling which established the Party as a secular version of the Trinity, three in one, united in the person of the leader. The learned beak picked his way through, looking for a constitution, and concluded that the Parliamentary Conservative Party, Conservative Central Office, and the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations were in fact three totally separate bodies, who just happened to share a leader.

So, successful infiltrators have to become the Leader, as Herself demonstrated when she single-handedly converted Rab Butler's centrist party to a monetarist freak show.

The Leader appoints the Party Chairman, and the Treasurer, to run Central Office. Central Office — and therefore the Leader — controls and owns the party's funds. It was established in 1870 by Disraeli 'to serve him and to grapple with the effects of the Second Reform Act for which he was widely blamed', said the party's evidence in the court case, managing even after a century to convey a sense of shell-shock at the extension of the franchise to working-class male householders.

The election of the Leader by MPs is a dangerously democratic step which was first taken to elect Ted Heath, whose aqueous success confirmed many a retired colonel's doubt about the whole business. Up to then the Leader had 'emerged' from 'the usual processes of consultation' — a mysterious process which probably entailed counting how many knives were between each candidate's shoulder blades. Least won.

As the judge said, 'In the process of selecting the party leader, neither the national union, nor the local constituency associations is consulted'. In fact some attempt was made on the last occasion to take 'soundings' in the depths of the Constituency Associations. Heath was accused of trying to use Central Office to make sure that only the echoes he wanted came back, so his Central Office apparatchiks were by-passed.

In the end only Tory members of the Commons voted in a tortuous procedure which, according to one academic, resembles 'a contract drawn up by Groucho Marx, without the Sanity Clause'. It was drawn up by Alex Douglas Home, so he may have a point. So novel and mentally taxing was voting without a whip that before the first ballot two dozen Tory MPs had inadvertently pledged — or hedged — themselves to vote for both Heath and Thatcher!

Neither Leader nor Central Office in Smith Square has official power over the National Conservative Union, organisers of Conference. Founded by busy Disraeli in 1867, it is a totally autonomous union of equally autonomous Conservative Associations in the constituencies. Its first Conference in 1868 rallied six delegates.

Each Constituency Association has a constitution which reflects local taste and history, and the only sanction the National Union has is to refuse the affiliation. It can't even enforce the suggested minimum quota of national funds raised from the bazaars, rummage sales and coffee mornings which keep the blue rinses buzzing loyally in the backwoods.

In return, Associations have little control over the union, or the party. As Norman Tebbit excoriated indirect elections in trade unions, he omitted to mention the even more indirect elections in the Conservative Union. In a system the dead spit of the hierarchy of the Soviets, local dignitaries elect Area Dignitaries, who elect the National Union Executive, or at least half of it, the other half coming from Central Office and MPs in one way or another. No postal ballots for the leadership of this union!

So, to be Leader you must be an MP, and presumably a party member. The untutored, non-*NS*-reading entrist will send off an application form to Central Office. No good at all, since you can only be a member of a Conservative Constituency Association (it may only cost £1), or a recognised Conservative Body, like the Primrose League or the Federation of Conservative Students (though continuing recognition for them may be in doubt). Taking the Tory whip in the House of Lords costs nothing and also gets you in, but makes it difficult to become Leader.

But what can you do when you've joined? Well, you *can* pass resolutions, but it has about the same political effect as passing water. The National Union organises the Conference, and prints all resolutions in the handbook. Then an anodyne shortlist of motions is selected by the Executive for consideration by the Conference. The motions thus chosen are invariably in line with the Leader's wishes, and amendments are only permitted at the absolute discretion of the chair.

As a token to the grass-roots, they are allowed to ballot to decide two motions of their own — as long as the subject hasn't been covered in one of the 'official' items. This, say some of the nicer Tories, is why the grass-roots seem so sanguinary and reactionary. Hanging and Immigration are about the only subjects left for them to talk about after the platform has had its bluster. A sample of decisions from one conference showed the controversy ranging from 'passed unanimously', to 'passed by an overwhelming majority', to the hotly contested dubious battle of 'carried by a very large majority'.

What makes this in-depth defence against democracy and the rank-and-file even more surprising is that the Conference has no power whatsoever over the Leader, Central Office, or the Tory MPs. Ideologically, the thing is as sewn up as the election results for Tirana Central. The time is ripe for legislation to hand political parties over to their members.

Ian Williams

Unemployment and labour market flexibility: The United Kingdom
by Guy Standing

Unemployment in the U.K. has risen dramatically since the 1970s. It has done so in the context of the 'British experiment' whereby macro-economic (monetary) policy has been designed to control inflation, while micro-economic policy has been directed towards employment. Although intended as a medium-term strategy, the short-term declines in output and employment have been greater than expected, while 'deindustrialisation' has accelerated. From the monetarist stance government policy has become more 'supply side', with deregulation and privatisation being key factors, coupled with concerted efforts to make the labour market more flexible. This book reviews the arguments and evidence on labour flexibility and examines the Special Measures adopted to check the growth of unemployment until supply-side measures could take effect. It concludes by considering alternative strategies designed to combine labour flexibility with income security, notably the merits of work reorganisation, profit-sharing and a social dividend approach to social security.
ISBN 92-2-105291-5 £10.90

International trade, employment and structural adjustment: The United States
by H. P. Gray, T. Pugel and I. Walter

How have industry, government and the labour force in the U.S. adjusted to pressures put on them by changes in international competition, innovation and demand? This book explores this question and finds that adjustment has differed greatly. In all industries job opportunities for unskilled and semi-skilled workers have declined and, where growth has been slow, protection-seeking behaviour has resulted. Where business and labour have united the result has been getting trade barriers raised. The Government, traditionally committed to free trade, is giving way to mounting pressures for protectionism. Priority must be given to international agreements that guarantee a 'level playing field' for all.
ISBN 92-2-105325-3 £9.10

Structural adjustment in Japan, 1970-82
by R. P. Dore, with contributions by K. Taira

This study is on the industrial adjustment process in industrialised Japan. Most other industrialised countries would no doubt name Japan as among the causes for the pressure to make adjustments at home. At the same time Japan has undergone a very thorough process of adjustment itself and only a few years ago it evoked protectionist reactions because of its low-cost, labour-intensive exports of manufactured goods. Today, partly as a result of this protectionism, Japan is a major force in virtually all fast-growing technology industries apart from aerospace. Its ability to become an important producer and exporter in many of these areas, and to do so with a minimum of friction and unemployment, makes it a rare example of successful adjustment.
ISBN 92-2-105268-0 £10.90

A manager's guide to international labour standards
by Alan Gladstone

International labour standards need not be viewed as constraints or encroachments on managers, but rather as helpful sources of practical and profitable information and guidance. This book explains the meaning and aim of international labour Conventions and Recommendations in a number of fields, and covers standards on the recognition of trade unions and other workers' representatives, and on dealing with them through collective bargaining, as well as various forms of consultative and participatory machinery. Standards touching on the personnel function and human resources management are also discussed.
ISBN 92-2-105412-8 £6.35

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ECONOMICS

How can Labour keep the IMF at bay?

David Currie

THE MASSIVE deficit in balance of payments reported last week came as an unpleasant surprise to financial markets. Under pressure even before the announcement, sterling has fallen sharply in response. Of course, one month's figures can be highly erratic but they are evidence in support of the National Institute's forecast that Britain's balance of payments will deteriorate substantially next year. After six years of substantial surplus, due to North Sea oil, the Institute see the current account swinging to a deficit of around £6 billion, or some 1.5 per cent of GDP. A large part of this deterioration is seen as coming from the fall in oil prices. But equally important is the perennial problem, obscured in recent years by North Sea oil, that the UK economy's tendency to suck in imports greatly exceeds its ability to export.

Of course, forecasting the balance of payments is a notoriously hazardous business, and the wise hedge their predictions around with qualifications. Presumably the Institute's forecast could have been rather less, or indeed more, on plausible alternative assumptions. The Institute's view is more pessimistic than most other forecasters, but there is a general consensus that the balance of payments is set to deteriorate. Rather than attaching greater significance to the precise figures, the relevant message to draw is that, in the present era of low oil prices, the medium to longer term trend in the balance of payments looks decidedly weak.

This is bad news for the government, for it is likely to lead to downward pressures on sterling: witness events in the foreign exchange markets in recent weeks. Since a high exchange rate has been the principal weapon in the government's strategy for reducing inflation, a weak exchange rate raises the prospect of higher inflation. Thus it is no surprise that the National Institute is forecasting a rise in inflation of some 2-2.5 per cent taking it to around 5-5.5 per cent next year. The government may be tempted to resist the fall in sterling by keeping UK interest rates high enough, but it is not evident that this strategy is viable in the longer run. And it may require a politically damaging rise in interest rates very soon: after the meeting of finance ministers in Washington last weekend it looks increasingly unlikely that the government will be saved by the Bundesbank cutting German interest rates to prevent the mark banging against its ceiling in the European Monetary System.

But if the balance of payments is a problem for Thatcher and Lawson, it represents a still greater problem for Labour as it prepares for power. For a policy of expanding the economy and cutting unemployment can easily raise the demand for imports and may also reduce exports by diverting the marginal exporter back to the domestic market. So unless effective ways are found of avoiding this, the danger is that Labour's programme will cause the balance of payments to swing into a large and unsustainable deficit. It this is permitted to happen, the result will be a financial crisis that will force a reversal of policy, either immediately or after substantial borrowings from the IMF. The events of 1966/7 and 1976 underline the point that this is a very major, probably the major, obstacle to domestic expansion.

Of course, the easiest way out is to hope that other countries will be expanding at the same time, thereby increasing the demand for British exports and keeping a favourable balance of payments position. It certainly makes sense for Labour to do everything possible to create the international consensus required to bring about a concerted international expansion in Europe or more broadly. But it does not make sense to rely much on the prospect of such a consensus emerging, unless we have a magic wand to dispose of Kohl, Chirac and others and replace them by more sympathetic characters.

Faced with this problem, the usual response on the left is to talk of import controls. But politically that is a non-starter: voters will reject as impractical a Labour strategy for reviving the economy based on import controls. And the electorate will be right, for import controls raise many serious problems. Traditional quotas, or their negotiated modern counterpart, voluntary export restraints, may have some role to play in certain sectors of the economy as part of industrial strategy, though there are usually better alternatives. But their aggregate benefits for the balance of payments are small, if not negative (because they allow the importer to sell a smaller quantity at a higher price).

Those who advocate tariffs usually argue that these should be confined to manufactures, to avoid raising the price of industrial inputs and raw materials. But this has the consequence of giving very different levels of effective protection for different sectors. (Thus a firm which uses a high proportion of tariff-exempted inputs to produce a tariff-protected output will experience a sharp rise in profitability: while one that relies on imported investment goods to produce a tariff-exempt output could well experience a fall in profits.) This can produce arbitrary and costly changes in the pattern of production that could be damaging to employment and no one has suggested a practical way around this problem. Even if, despite these problems, an expansion of output did result, it is unlikely to be well-founded. This is because firms will be reluctant to invest on the basis of profits boosted by tariffs or controls, for they will fear their removal. Past experience and the prospect of pressure from the international community suggest that this fear would be well-founded.

WHAT THEN is the alternative? Clearly the best solution is to make our goods and services more competitive internationally by acting on the supply side of the economy to raise efficiency. Gains in efficiency, allowing keener prices, and improvements in product quality (design, reliability, delays in delivery and after-sales back-up) would address the longstanding problem of Britain's weakness in international trade. Tackling these aspects of economic performance must be a major objective of Labour's industrial strategy. The difficulty is that improving these aspects of economic performance is a slow and difficult process, so that gains will take time to show up. And the hope of such gains will do nothing to remove the immediate problem facing a Labour government — that expansion may easily precipitate a short run balance of payments and exchange rate crisis. What is required, therefore, are measures that can contain these external pressures in the short term sufficiently to permit a sustained attack on unemployment. For this, a combination of the following is required.

First, the expansionary measures need to be targeted so as to reduce unemployment with the least consequence for the balance of payments. The obvious possibility is increasing expenditure on activities with low import content, such as construction and public sector services. Since such activities are also labour intensive, there is little confict here between the need to create the largest number of jobs and the need to minimise the consequences for the balance of payments.

Second, an important role can be played by the proposed scheme to induce the pension funds and insurance companies to repatriate the enormous volume of funds that they have invested in overseas portfolios since the abolition of exchange controls in 1979. When that scheme is introduced, the additional inflow of funds will permit the UK to run a larger balance of payments deficit without downward pressure on the exchange rate. Indeed it is an essential part of the macroeconomic logic of the scheme that a larger external deficit should accompany it. For if it is not, the desired repatriation of funds could not be accomplished.

If the larger external deficit is not planned for, the danger is that the increased inflow of funds will simply lead to an appreciation of the exchange rate and a loss of jobs in the export and import-competing sectors. It is this possibility that several City commentators have seized on to suggest that the next Labour government will face the problem of an over-strong pound, an unusual prospect indeed. However, in fact, the scheme should allow a larger external deficit to be sustainable. reducing the danger of a depreciation of sterling with inflationary consequences.

Third, the evidence suggests that cutting industry's costs by reducing employers' National Insurance contributions is an effective way of expanding the economy without generating a large external deficit. It also has the merit of reducing inflationary pressures at the same time and of generating jobs, especially in the hard-hit manufacturing sector.

These measures could well provide room for significant reductions in unemployment without balance of payments problems. But much will depend on the growth of wage costs. The benefits of these measures could easily be eroded by an excessive rise in wage settlements that erodes UK competitiveness still further. And their effectiveness could be greatly enhanced by moderation in wage settlements in the private sector. It is for this reason that I am sceptical of Paul Ormerod's argument (*NS* 29 August) that Labour does not need an incomes policy in the private sector. It is certainly possible to cut unemployment without an incomes policy. But how fast and how far to borrow Roy Hattersley's phrase) it is possible to go in that direction will depend on how far wage settlements can maintain, and improve, the UK's competitive position. □

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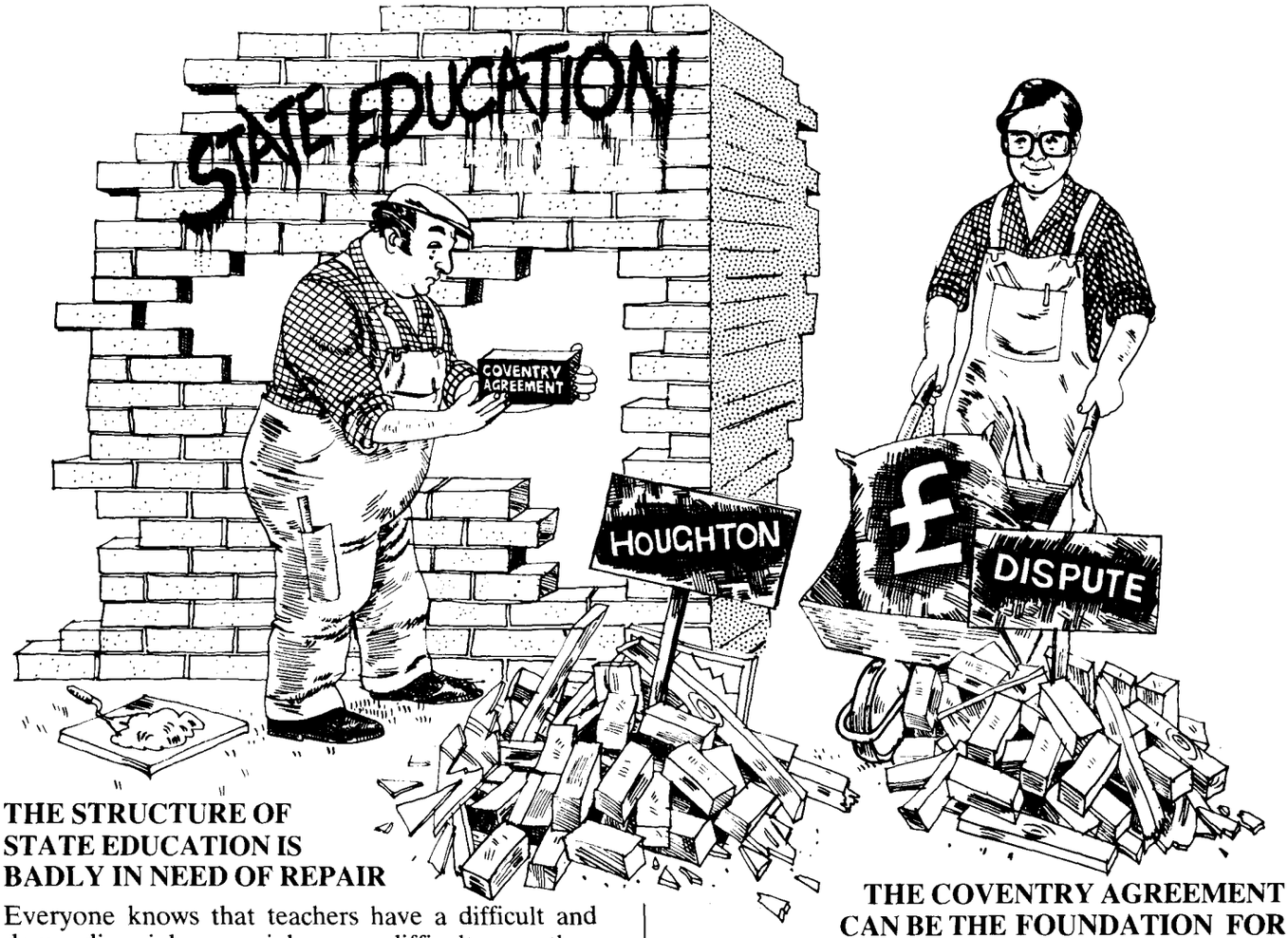
ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL



THE STRUCTURE OF STATE EDUCATION IS BADLY IN NEED OF REPAIR

Everyone knows that teachers have a difficult and demanding job — a job more difficult now than 12 years ago. So how can it be fair that teachers' salaries have fallen in these 12 years by 33% compared with the index of average earnings for non-manual workers? Is it any wonder that experienced teachers are retiring early, good teachers leaving for better paid jobs and bright young people avoiding teaching altogether?

The future prosperity of our nation rests on the foundations of a high quality education system. The morale of teachers is a crucial component in building for the future. Well motivated teachers mean long term peace and stability in schools leading to higher standards of academic achievement and social behaviour.

THE COVENTRY AGREEMENT CAN BE THE FOUNDATION FOR A NEW EDUCATION STRUCTURE

The NAS/UWT (representing 128,000 classroom teachers) believes that there is now a unique chance to build the high quality education service our children deserve. We propose a new pay structure which will create proper esteem for the classroom teacher. We accept the need for a teacher appraisal system to guarantee quality education. We are ready to negotiate a teachers' contract which will define duties and responsibilities.

Of course, new systems and contracts have a price-tag. Coventry provides the bricks to build a bright future for our schools. Only the Government can provide the financial mortar to cement the bricks together.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE: THE PROJECTS MUST NOT FAIL FOR LACK OF CASH

NAS/UWT
The Career Teachers' Organisation

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DEBATE

Let us face the floater — with a practical *and* principled manifesto

Roy Hattersley

THE LABOUR PARTY works best when it is a coalition of objectives with the items in its programme supported by a wide variety of men and women for a wide variety of different reasons. The announcement that since a programme 'is socialist' the electorate must take it or leave it alone will always result in the floating voters being washed towards another shore.

Yet a rag bag of policies, chosen because they are thought to be individually attractive to the politically footloose cannot be turned into a convincing manifesto. The Labour Party needs the confidence and cohesion that comes from a programme which is built around consistent ideological positions. The programme has to contain proposals that are directly and obviously relevant to the nation's immediate needs. The Labour Party cannot win unless it offers a genuinely socialist prospectus. But it will not win unless voters with no socialist conviction react to that prospectus with the comment 'it makes sense to me'. We have to pay proper respect to both principle and practice. There is no conflict in the simultaneous pursuit of those objectives. Socialism and common sense are not incompatible conditions.

The Attlee government of 1945 was elected to office on the most radical programme that the Labour Party has ever offered the electorate — proving that ideological commitment does not necessarily prevent electoral success. There were many reasons for Labour's post-war triumph. But, in part, 1945 was socialism's moment because the Labour Party made it so by convincing men and women who were emotionally on socialism's side that they could, with safety, allow their votes to follow their conscience. Attlee offered a reasonable revolution which both caught the country's enthusiasm for change and allayed fears that change might cause disruption.

The Labour Party succeeded, for perhaps the only time in its history, in reconciling the two imperatives of belief and action. It sought a new social order, remembering that socialist parties 'forget their mission' when they seek 'not a social order of a different kind . . . but a social order of the same kind in which money and power will be some what differently distributed'. The government of 1945, in respecting R. H. Tawney's second injunction, planned its chosen changes in society with reality as well as passion:

> The important point for socialists is not that they should express — or even hold — opinions on policy which attract attention as extreme. It is that they should show extreme sense in reaching them, extreme restraint in keeping their mouths shut until their opinions are worth stating and extreme resolution in acting upon them when stated.

That combination of principle and practicality created a united party. For it satisfied the ideologists who believed in the abiding values of socialism and their more pragmatic comrades and friends who judged policy by its immediate effect on the conditions of the time.

The success is best illustrated by the way in which both the party and the government dealt with public ownership. Conference — against the advice of the Executive — asked for 'the transfer to public ownership of the land, large-scale building, heavy industry and all forms of banking, transport and fuel and power'. It was not a menu which could have been digested whole in a single five-year parliament. So the manifesto, *Let Us Face The Future*, could only include items which had been selected for *a la carte*. The party accepted the selection because the need for priorities was honestly argued in open debate. Knowing that the new Cabinet believed in the nationalisation of coal and steel removed doubts about its real reason for claiming that other parts of the public ownership programme were either unnecessary or impractical.

THE LABOUR PARTY's case for the nationalisation of coal, gas, iron and steel, electricity, railways, and the Bank of England was advanced in terms of practical necessity. Henry Pelling, in his history of the Attlee government, described the way in which the public ownership proposals were set out in the invincible language of common sense. 'The argument was frequently made that such measures were essential to the interests of efficency' and the programme was 'justified in the terms of practical effect'. The same language was used in the actual manifesto. The 'term public ownership was used more often than nationalisation', while the Bank of England was merely to be 'taken over' and used as one of the instruments of economic expansion and full employment.

> ***'After the war, the party knew that socialism was relevant to the real lives of real people and was careful not to describe it in a way which made it seem alien to men and women who did not like what they heard about Karl Marx'***

The manifesto was comfortingly repetitious. The 'public ownership of the fuel and power industries' was guaranteed to 'bring great economies in operation and make it possible to modernise production methods and raise safety standards in every colliery'. The 'public ownership of gas and electricity undertaking will', *Let Us Face The Future* promised, 'lower charges, prevent competitive waste, open the way for co-ordinated research and development and lead to the reforming of uneconomic areas of distribution'. Iron and steel was to be taken into 'public ownership' in order to increase the industry's efficiency. Pelling describes the language used to justify the nationalisation programme as 'carefully designed to draw uncommitted voters'.

It is doubtful if the Labour Party of 1945 took its public relations as seriously as Pelling suggests. For *Let Us Face The Future* was drawn up before the age of 'buzz-words' and 'media hypes'. But if the manifesto was written with the deliberate intention of bringing floating voters into port on a gentle tide of reason, it certainly succeeded. The Labour Party won 48 per cent of the vote, gained 140 seats and established a parliamentary majority of 180. We can win in 1987 or 1988 with a smaller percentage of the vote and the capture of fewer seats. We ought to take notice as well as take heart. The lesson of 1945 is that there are no invincible majorities, only politicians who lack the will and policies which lack the popular appeal to attract sufficient support.

The language of the Labour Party's manifesto — important though language was and is — could not in itself have produced the landslide of 1945. Success came from what the language signified. After the war, a vast majority of the party knew that socialism was relevant to the real lives of real people and were careful not to describe it in a way which made it seem extraneous or even alien to men and women who had not read Tawney, never heard of G.D.H. Cole and did not like what they heard about Karl Marx. There was no abandonment of principle, just the understanding that if the principles are worth having they can be put into demonstrably beneficial practice in the real world.

WE CANNOT RECREATE the conditions of 1945. Next year or the year after we have to win in a way appropriate to our time. But there is a parallel. In 1945, the country was in a mood to recognise the merits of social ownership — as long as the advantages were rationally argued. Today there is a deep revulsion at the widening gap that separates rich and poor and a growing enthusiasm to create a more compassionate society. That is not the same as a generalised belief in soaking the rich as an article of faith. It represents a growing understanding of the price that has been paid for the top people's £3.6 billion tax cut and the continuing cost of an economic policy based on the belief that reducing the standard rate of income tax is the Grail for which every Treasury Galahad must search. It is the pensioners and the families below the poverty line who appear on the debit side of the balance sheet. To spell out a careful calculation of what redistribution means in practice rather than just to enjoy the sound of the slogan in our speeches is the effort that has to be made if victory is to become certain.

To argue our case in hard, practical, down-to-earth terms is certainly the way to win the election. It is also the duty which we owe to the principles in which we believe. Socialism is a practical creed and we need to start thinking about it in practice. Deciding as a 'matter of principle' how many of the top companies we propose to nationalise is about as important an activity as calculating how many angels can balance on the point of a pin. □

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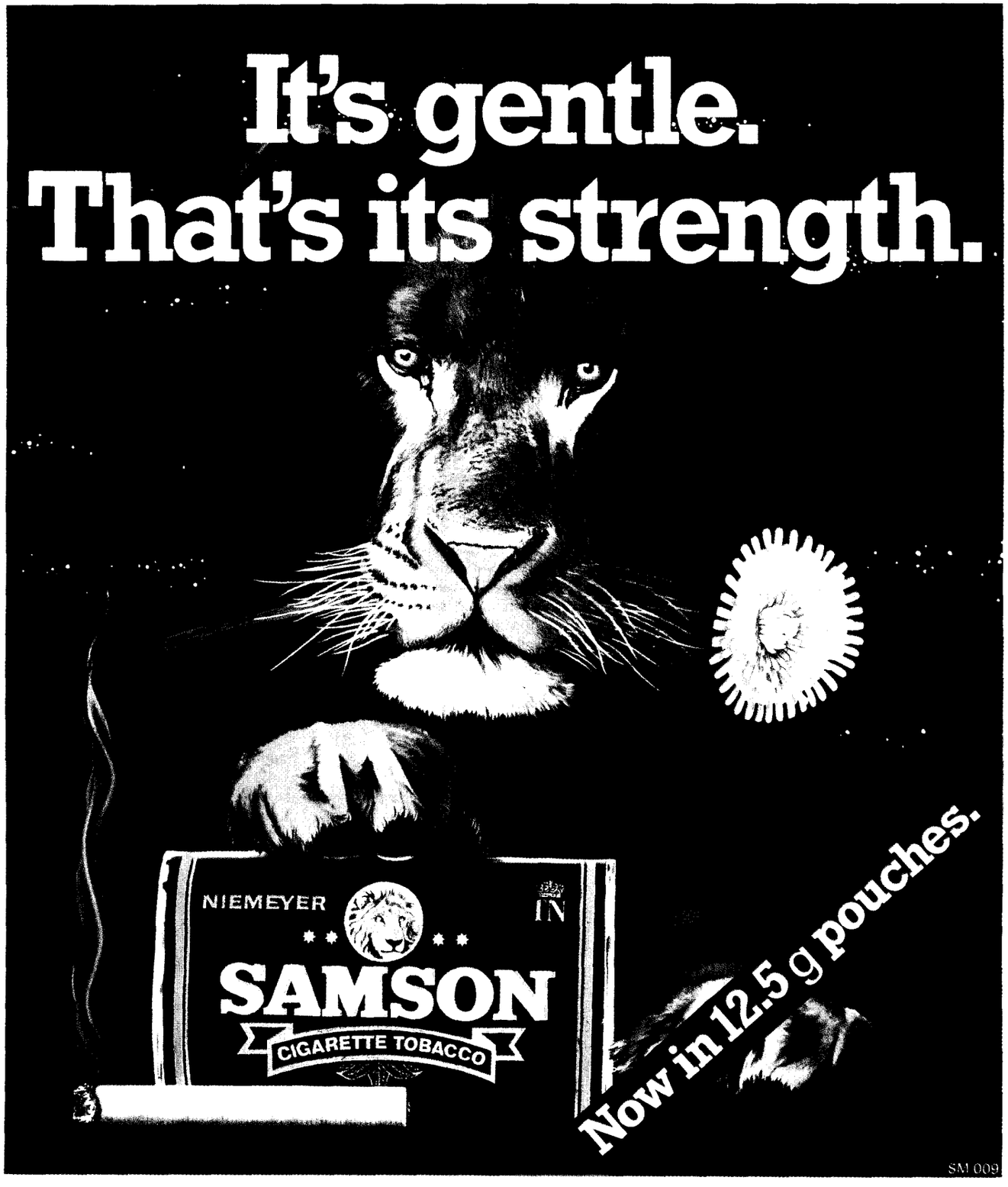

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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

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The forces of Marxist reaction at large

***The fact that Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping has put off retiring reveals the vulnerability of his economic reforms to a conservative Marxist backlash, argues* COLINA MACDOUGALL**

CHINA IS FINELY poised between continuing reform and a return to orthodoxy. Its 13th Communist Party Congress next year is likely to prove a watershed: the octogenarian leader, Deng Xiaoping, is striving to consolidate his economic reforms before he leaves the political scene for ever. His statement that he has been 'persuaded' not to retire until next year is a clear sign that he cannot rely on his successors to resist pressure from China's conservatives to revert to a tightly controlled Communist system.

The Central Committee meeting last week (25-28 September) indirectly confirmed the divisions in the party with its resolution affirming both the reforms and the need for ideological progress. While the reformers are probably as concerned as the hardliners about the materialism which has emerged in China in recent years, the renewed party stress on socialist ideology will be seen as a signal of the continuing influence of the conservatives. A key conservative, Deng Liqun (no relation to Deng Xiaoping), surfaced recently with a pointed new version of Deng Xiaoping's reformist slogan, 'Seek truth from facts'.

'Seek truth under the banner of Marxism', said Deng Liqun, not once but twice, in a speech last month. Deng Liqun gained fame outside China when he masterminded a short, sharp campaign against western 'spiritual pollution' in 1983, and though he was later eased out of the top propaganda job he held then, he remains a member of the powerful party secretariat.

THE IMPLICIT attack on Deng Xiaoping's reforms as non-Marxist in the slogan's altered wording would have been lost on no one in China. (Indeed, a few days later a Canton newspaper indirectly sprang to the reform's defence, justifying the original version as a true legacy from Chairman Mao.)

A vital reform, needed to get China's dinosaur economy to function more efficiently, was blocked in September by Deng's conservative opponents. After 'heated discussion', a bankruptcy law, designed to formalise procedures for closing down some of China's huge number of loss-making factories, was shelved by the Standing Committee of the top legislative body, the National People's Congress. The Chinese press lauded this as an example of the new democracy in action, but it clearly represented a defeat for Deng. China's most publicised official bankruptcy — of an equipment factory in north-east China last July — may be the last such capitalist wonder for some time.

A further policy proposal, raised this year but now delayed, was that of a modest degree of political reform. This is essential, as Deng's men see it, to air controversial issues so as to prevent ill-informed decisions and give technocrats a chance to function without party interference. Discussion on the subject surfaced during the summer with the suggestion, made frequently in the past but not seriously implemented, that the party should step back from doing the government's work.

It soon took off far beyond expectations into exploratory reviews by political scientists of the US 'checks and balances' system, the lessons of Watergate and the methods of financial control in Japan. These considerations were backed by serious dissection of the present system's shortcomings — the arbitrariness, arrogance, corruption and nepotism which emerge when no official actions can be questioned.

The worst of these failings have been mitigated since the Cultural Revolution by an infant legal system and a more open press, though China still has a long way to go. But a senior official said that the discussions were only 'scholars' views', and Deng Xiaoping himself told a group of visitors that it was 'too late' to include the subject in the just-held Central Committee meeting agenda. The question has been shelved.

OTHER SIGNS reveal that the conservative opposition to Deng is alive and well. Last year, one of China's most respected elderly leaders, Chen Yun, voiced outspoken criticisms of Deng's agricultural reform policy because it had led to a fall in the crucial grain harvest. Chen Yun's name has appeared at regular intervals in the Chinese media this year, particularly during the summer when a volume of his speeches was published.

His views probably have considerable support, especially among mid- and low-level officials who found the old bureaucratic planned economy much easier to run than the new 'responsibility system' which involves risky decisions. Beijing's English langugage newspaper *China Daily* pointed out a couple of weeks ago that rural officials always revert to the old system of giving the peasants orders as soon as there's any kind of crisis.

'The peasants are afraid our policies may change, and so are the intellectuals', said a distinguished Chinese journalist, Wang Ruoshui, last August. While it says much for the relaxations of recent years that Wang should be able to speak out, especially as he was earlier under a cloud for being too liberal, his words confirm that almost everyone in China has anxieties about the future.

In this uncertainty even tiny signs of reassessment of the much-criticised radical past may point to hidden reefs which could hole, if not shipwreck, reform. Wang Dongxing, once Mao's bodyguard but dismissed into obscurity from the politburo several years ago, was spotted recently on the way to a martial arts display. Mao himself is back in the news as the author of some previously unpublished writings, and his birthplace is getting a facelift to welcome more tourists.

Lin Biao, the Cultural Revolution Army leader who allegedly tried a coup and was killed in an aircrash in 1971 while fleeing to the Soviet Union, has been restored to a niche among successful generals of the 1930s and '40s civil war. The modern Peking operas produced by Jiang Qing, Mao's film star wife and evil genius of the Cultural Revolution, are enjoying a revival.

DENG IS ALREADY vulnerable because of two critical problems. First, China's centrally planned industry is proving extremely difficult to reform, an essential step toward increasing productivity. Last year new freedoms granted to factory managers had to be hastily retracted when the economy began to overheat. The clamps applied to cool it reduced industrial growth to almost nil; while this has begun to recover, there is no sign that the reformers have learned how to stimulate productivity without losing control.

Second, the nationwide corruption and crime that spread like a virus through China's bureaucracy last year has been swept under the carpet. True, the blatant cases of smuggling and illegal currency trading of 1985 have been suppressed, and officials have been forbidden to take part in business. But it continues at a different level — only the other day, a racket was uncovered in a timepiece factory where party secretaries in league with workshop foremen made off with thousands of Chinese yuan worth of watch parts. The retribution promised for crimes committed by even the most senior leaders at a meeting early this year has, to no one's surprise, fizzled out in the punishment of a mere handful.

Yet Deng and his men still have the power and popular support to press on with aspects of China's modernisation programme. In the last few months they have launched a freer labour market, trying to break the traditional communist 'iron rice bowl' system which gave every worker a job for life and allowed him to pass it on to his heirs. Because nobody could be sacked, Chinese institutions became famous for the employees asleep at their desks or quietly knocking off for a game of cards. Revolutionary regulations published last month stipulated that all new workers should be hired on contract and could be dismissed if they are not satisfactory.

At the same time Deng's men are experimenting with plans to liven up the economy with share and bond trading. While Liu Hongru, one of China's extremely capable top bankers admitted in September that 'We need some time to study the question', the north-eastern city of Shenyang has already started a small bond market and Shanghai is considering a fully-fledged stock exchange. Chinese officials have said privately for several years that such markets would be necessary to mobilise individual savings.

Although the sale of shares in the strict sense of a slice of a company's equity is mostly restricted to the new and relatively small private and collective sectors, a handful of state-run plants have begun to join in.

So Deng is able at least to keep up the momentum of recent years in economic reform. But the need for his charismatic physical presence at the helm and for constant compromise with the conservative Marxists is worrying anyone who hopes to see the rising standard of living and pleasanter atmosphere of recent years continue. □

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Soviet sex: doing your demographic duty

***Russian sexual morality is geared to making more babies, and having stable families in which to rear them, writes* LYNNE ATTWOOD**

THE SOVIET UNION has been debating for some 20 years whether a form of sex education should be introduced in schools. Those who advocate it have pointed to the increase in teenage pregnancy, venereal disease, divorce, and the use of abortion as the primary form of birth control, claiming that these result from young people getting their information about sex on the street rather than as part of a general moral upbringing. Others have argued that the subject is too sensitive, teachers are not qualified to deal with it, and that it will only stimulate sexual interest and encourage immorality. The authority of Lenin is often invoked: he thought that sex for its own sake was a bourgeois phenomenon, and that 'the sex-instinct should be subordinated to the principles and norms of communist morality'.

Western approaches to sex education all seem to have proven the point. A Soviet education theorist was sent to Sweden to check out the sex education programme in operation there. 'Even as a professor of physiology' she was embarrassed at having to report her observations to the Ministry of Education. Instead of strengthening the family and reducing the incidence of VD, her report said the 'depraved materials' which passed for educational texts had created a heightened interest in pornography, a collapse in morals, and 'so-called group families: a group of young people share a house — a "house without partitions" — and children are born without anyone knowing who their fathers are'.

Nonetheless, a course did enter the school curriculum in the last academic year. It goes under the name 'the Ethics and Psychology of Family Life' and deals not with sex education per se but with 'sex upbringing', a term coined to differentiate the Soviet version from the 'sex enlightenment' of Western schools.

One of its professed aims is the inculcation of a 'socialist morality' in young people. This is the understanding that there is no such thing as a private, individual action; everything has its social significance. Sex is no exception.

The socialist sexual morality which the course tries to develop in young people is geared at producing more babies, and having stable families in which to rear them. The 'demographic crisis' is the real rationale behind the course. The population is failing to reproduce itself: in the European republics the one-child family is now the norm.

The aim of the course is, then, to strengthen the family and encourage it to produce its optimum three children. The course covers topics such as the importance of the family in socialist society; the socialist personality and its relation to the family; the family's role in forming children's personalities; the unity of personal and social interests under socialism; masculinity and femininity, and personal relations between the sexes; love and marriage; and the family and the state. It involves overt sex-role socialisation, with children being taught the importance of traditional masculinity and femininity and of developing these in themselves. Girls are reminded that despite their official equality, maternity is still the pinnacle of their achievement, and that nature has geared their personalities towards this end. Boys are taught that 'real men' don't drink the family budget but nurture their wives and provide for their families (the assumption being that if women are to have three children apiece, their own working lives will be interrupted more than they have been in the past).

There is some discussion of sex under the euphemistic title 'hygiene'. This mainly consists of warning children of the dire consequences of masturbation (which damages the undeveloped organism, causes untold mental anguish, and hinders the achievement of 'normal' sexual relations in marriage), and of sex before marriage. The language is full of biblical imagery — 'vice', 'sin', 'onanism'.

Girls are seen as the custodians of sexual morality. There is much talk about the erroneous belief spread by depraved people under the influence of bourgeois values that 'maidenly honour' is an out-dated concept, and how teachers should aim to reverse this thinking. Contraception does get a mention (the coil is the only method heavily promoted), but as the way in which married couples can space their children.

HOMOSEXUALITY is still illegal in the Soviet Union, and, not surprisingly, does not get a mention on the course. (Only male homosexuality is actually forbidden by law — as in Victorian England, lesbianism is evidently inconceivable.)

However, I have found two references to homosexuality in texts on 'sex upbringing'. One was published in 1960 and is directed at teenage boys. It defines homosexuality as 'an unnatural attraction to people of the same sex', but the author (a medical doctor) evidently assumes that all homosexuals are also paedophiles:

> Homosexuals try by any possible method to win the sympathy of young boys; they buy them sweets and cigarettes and cinema tickets, they give them money, help them with their homework, and generally pretend that they selflessly love young people. But after such preparations, they sooner or later proceed to action. Don't allow them to touch you! Don't be shy of your parents and teachers, tell them immediately about any such attempts with yourself or with other boys! . . . Homosexuality is a punishable crime, and homosexuals well know this.

The second is in a recent article by a man called Belkin, whose speciality is changing people's sexes — i.e. resocialising people who, because of some genital abnormality, were assigned the wrong gender at birth and notice the mistake when they start sprouting inappropriate sex characteristics at puberty. Belkin reconstructs his patients' personalities according to rigid masculine and feminine stereotypes, and argues that dichotomised male and female personalities are essential for mental health; the alternative is 'an intolerable feeling of "sexlessness" (which) expresses itself in anti-social behaviour such as alcoholism, drug-taking and homosexuality'.

Labelling homosexuality an anti-social activity, and placing it on a par with alcoholism and drug-taking, brings us back to the demographic concern. Homosexuality is seen as anti-social partly because it is non-reproductive; homosexuals are not performing their demographic duty. (I once had a personal interview with Belkin in Moscow, in which he told me he had a sideline in 'curing' homosexuals. They came to him voluntarily, he said, because just being unmarried and childless, let alone gay, makes life very difficult in the Soviet Union.)

This concept of duty also explains how the resurrection of traditional masculinity and femininity is not seen as incompatible with women's equality. Equality must fit around social obligations; and the main obligation of the woman is, right now, to have children. 'It may be', suggests Belkin, 'that those who vociferously demand a single "identity" for the sexes, or who call for a "sexual revolution" . . ., are merely demonstrating a selfish and irresponsible desire to escape from the role which nature and society assign to every individual'. □

A retreat from Moscow's line

THE SITUATION isn't uniform across all the satellite nations of the Soviet empire. The latest issue of the quarterly *Lesbian and Gay Socialist* describes the unMuscovite directions taken in the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

A first-ever GDR conference on homosexuality was permitted in Leipzig last year to estimate 'the position of homosexuals in our society'. Its findings are apparently going to be used for teacher-training, for the education of doctors, and for public information 'to make the entry of homosexual young people into adult life easier'.

Lesbian and Gay Socialist cites Dr Edwin Gunther of Jena university as the GDR's leading 'expert' on homosexuality's place in society, and quotes him using language indistinguishable from the 'advanced' Western terminology currently as unpopular in Downing Street as in the Kremlin: 'Our concern is not to prescribe norms of sexual relations for other people. The moral value of a homosexual is determined not by sexual orientation but by participation in society and personal qualities'.

Referring to the prejudice that nonetheless exists in the GDR, Gunther calls 'intolerance, mockery and unpleasant remarks at home, in school, in apprenticeships and in the work brigade', the result, mainly, of ignorance. The Soviet Ministry of Education and current British secretary of state for education stand rebuked for identical failures. ●

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ARTS

Jean Ross (right) sighs at the travesty of herself presented by Liza Minnelli (below left) and the Strand Theatre's Kelly Hunter (below right)

Kobal Collection

BACKSTAGE

Reply to Berlin

Sarah Caudwell

Christopher Isherwood's 'Sally Bowles' was drawn, as is widely recognised, from real writer/actress Jean Ross: here, Ross's daughter by Claud Cockburn challenges the image's sexism

THERE IS A NEW revival of *Cabaret* on at the moment* — an event of the kind which, in my mother's lifetime, would have inspired some bright young journalist to ring up asking to interview 'the real Sally Bowles'.

Such interviews were invariably a disappointment on both sides: the journalists always wanted to talk about sex and my mother always wanted to talk about politics. It was left to me to soothe her exasperation.

'They say they want to know about Berlin in the Thirties. But they don't want to know about the unemployment or the poverty or the Nazis marching through the streets — all they want to know is how many men I went to bed with. Really, darling, how on earth can anyone be interested in that?'

'I suppose they're interested in you — that's to say, in Sally — as a sort of forerunner of the emancipated woman.'

'Well, they don't think emancipation depends on how many men one sleeps with, do they? No one's that idiotic.'

She never liked *Goodbye to Berlin*, nor felt any sense of identity with the character of Sally Bowles, which in many respects she thought more closely modelled on one of Isherwood's male friends. (His homosexuality could not at that time be openly admitted.) She never cared enough, however, to be moved to any public rebuttal. She did from time to time settle down conscientiously to write a letter, intending to explain to Isherwood the ways in which she thought he had misunderstood her; but it seldom progressed beyond 'Dear Christopher . . .' It was interrupted, no doubt, by more urgent things: meetings about Vietnam, petitions against nuclear weapons, making my supper, hearing my French verbs. It was in Isherwood's life, not hers, that Sally Bowles remained a significant figure.

In the transformations of the novel for stage and cinema the characterisation of Sally has become progressively cruder and less subtle and the stories about 'the original' correspondingly more highly-coloured. The latest revival has spawned an amazingly tall story of exhibitionism on the stage of the Berlin Opera, remotely and inaccurately derived from a rather schoolboyish speculation of Isherwood's in *Christopher and his Kind*. Perhaps, after all, it is time to write something — if only because, since life imitates art, it sometimes matters to know how art falsifies life.

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The plain, almost documentary quality of Isherwood's style has beguiled a wide audience into believing that the events and characters of *Goodbye to Berlin* are closer to factual reality than is commonly the case with a novel. Isherwood himself, however, has somewhere pointed out that, to be 'lifelike', it is neither necessary nor sufficient for a work of fiction to be literally true to life: what is essential is that it should accord with the reader's expectations of life — expectations based not only on direct experience but on the conventions of existing literature. The most significant differences between Sally and her supposed model are attributable, it seems to me, to his having preferred convention to reality.

The convention does not permit an attractive young woman to have much in the way of intellectual accomplishments and Isherwood follows it loyally. There is nothing in his portrait of Sally to suggest that she might have any genuine ability as an actress, still less as a writer. My mother, on the other hand, was at least talented enough as an actress to be cast as Anitra in Max Reinhardt's production of *Peer Gynt* and competent enough as a writer to earn her living, not long afterwards, as a scenario-writer and journalist.

Again, the convention does not permit such a girl to have much awareness of political events. Thus there is attributed to Sally some casual reference to 'an awful old Jew'. 'Ah, how typical,' thinks the reader, impressed by the author's perception, by his sense of historic irony, 'how typical of an empty-headed, middle-class English girl so thoughtlessly to ally herself with the attitudes which led to Dachau and Auschwitz.'

The fact is that such a phrase would have been as alien to my mother's vocabulary as a sentence in Swahili; she had no more deeply rooted passion than a loathing of racialism and so, from the outset, of fascism. She may well, at 19, have been less informed about politics than Isherwood, five or six years older; but, when the Spanish war came and the fascists were bombing Madrid, it was she, not Isherwood, who was there to report it.

Above all, the convention requires that a woman must be either virtuous (in the sexual sense) or a tart. So Sally, who is plainly not virtuous, must be a tart. At this point the relationship between reality and convention becomes strained almost to breaking-point, since what Sally actually does (as opposed to the author's opinion of why she is doing it) is the direct opposite of what one would expect in a woman determined to exploit her attractiveness for commercial advantage. Persistently and perversely, she fails to go to bed with anyone with any money. Rejecting 'Fritz', evidently affluent, evidently in love with her, she throws herself instead into the arms of a penniless actor. Not one of the sexual encounters referred to in the novel improves her financial position by so much as the price of dinner.

The author seems not unaware of the contradiction. 'For a would-be demi-mondaine,' he writes anxiously, 'she seemed to have surprisingly little business sense or tact.' In short, since she is not a successful tart, his solution is to represent her as an unsuccessful one.

Unsuccessful? As a tart? The reader may accept Isherwood's judgment of her talents as insufficient for success as a singer or an actress. But as a tart? She is, we are told, young, beautiful and elegant and presumably possessed of at least that minimum of social graces instilled by an expensive English boarding school: to fail, with these advantages, in a profession not generally reputed intellectually exacting argues a singular lack of application. The reader despairs of her — the girl is impossible.

And, as Isherwood draws her, so she is. What on earth, if her motives are those he imputes to her, is she doing in Berlin at all? Her upper-middle-class background would have afforded her, surely, ampler opportunities than the bars and nightclubs of Berlin to find a rich man to keep her, and that with all the safeguards of a respectable marriage. Her way of life is inexplicable save as a deliberate repudiation of that possibility, of any possibility of making her sexual relationships the subject of a commercial bargain. Or can she really imagine that she will be freer, more emancipated, if she is kept by a series of men rather than one?

My mother certainly would not have thought so. To depend for a living on providing sexual pleasure, whether or not in the context of marriage, seemed to her the ultimate denial of freedom and emancipation. The idea so deeply repelled her that she simply could not, I think, have been attracted to a man who was rich, or allied herself permanently to anyone less incorrigibly impecunious than my father.

She did not see the question as one of personal morality, but as a political one. What roused her to moral indignation was not the way women behave, seldom even the way men behave, but the existence of any system which offered women no other means of livelihood. She tried to explain this to the bright young journalists.

'They asked if I was a feminist. Well, of course I am, darling. But they don't think that feminism's about sex, do they? It's about economics.' □

*Cabaret, *directed by Gillian Lynne, is currently playing at the Strand Theatre, London.*

MUSIC

Any old iron

Marek Kohn

Under the arches; in a Paddington depot: Test Department take their sounds to some less than predictable venues

SOME YOUNG PEOPLE join bands and hope for chart success. Others join sects and hope to sell papers. The young men who formed Test Department in Deptford five years ago beat pieces of metal. It was a kind of middle way.

Making music by using large pieces of scrap as percussion instruments was hardly an innovation but, for Test Department, it represented an important statement of intent. Its members had met in the milieu of South-East London squatter culture. Ill at ease with the prevailing squat tendencies towards hippie mysticism and punk anarchism, they wanted to make what the wiry and affable Graham calls 'direct and emotional music, as opposed to hippie and punk escapism'. Angus, his taller and more theoretical colleague, observes that 'what always kept us separate was the desire for discipline — not that we've ever really kept to it'. Test Department was also a reaction against the 'decadence' of pop. Coming to music as 'avid *Top Of The Pops* fans', rather than as ideologues or performance artists, they wanted no truck with 'the idea that we had to be smacked out and covered in makeup and act like pop stars'. Brett, who contributes to the visual side of the group's work, goes on to explain that their primitivism was an attempt to develop a music of their own by starting from scratch.

Their anti-hedonistic stance, and the way they placed brawn at the centre of their art, soon led to an exploration of appropriate accompanying imagery. They cleaved to the puritanical and the totalitarian, affecting austere haircuts and military monochrome. Inevitably, they were accused of dabbling with fascism; such charges were among the early influences which prompted them to consider the political implications of what they were doing. Their discovery of Stakhanovism was, perhaps, equally inevitable. Performances in which severe young men hammered the relics of heavy industry sent the performers back to Futurism; and Constructivism was just a step away. They learnt about the poets and the agitprop trains and, from these, developed a politics oriented more towards materialism than the mystical idealism endemic in the youth ghettos. It might seem gauche or predictable to better educated radicals, but Test Department are fresh enough to appreciate the exhilaration of finding inspiration in the past for themselves.

Brett rejects the idea that they are indulging in nostalgia. 'There's no harm in rediscovering history,' he says, 'especially for young people. The history they're given is from Elvis onwards and they're supposed to find the answers to the world's problems in that. That's all dead — punk was the end of it. It's being recycled over and over again, because it's dead, and *that's* nostalgia. We're not actually nostalgic. We just believe in digging things up that people should know about.'

The group made something of a name for itself thanks to pop's endless search for novelty, which landed it some much-needed funding from the multinational music conglomerate Phonogram. The act was dropped when it became clear that metal-bashing was not going to storm the charts. Test Department also built up a reputation for rejecting established music industry practices. In particular, it made a point of ferreting out unusual venues. A police raid on a railway arch in which they were playing did them no harm, publicity-wise; their relationship with British Rail was legitimised by turning Cannon Street Station into a performance space.

The event that gave substance to the group's political and artistic flirtations was the miners' strike. Many pop musicians were deeply influenced by participating in the support culture that grew around the solidarity movement. Test Department was probably the only group actually to gain an extra member from NUM ranks. Another result was *Shoulder To Shoulder*, a moving compilation of Test Department's 'work with hammers' and the voices of the South Wales Striking Miners' Choir. Playing to audiences in

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mining communities, they caused even more of a culture shock than most of the motley performers who bemused miners with their support.

Angus insists that they connected. 'After people got over the shock of us using the equipment that they do, it really did have a strong emotional effect on a lot of miners themselves. When we went to places like Snowdon, we had an incredible response, and that was to do with a hell of a lot more than just the fact that we were a band who'd made the effort to go down there. It did genuinely cut through.' It certainly got through to Kent miner Alan Sutcliffe. One of those for whom the strike was a degree course in political education, he now follows Test Department performances clad in a blanket, quoting Bobby Sands.

The group's pretensions to becoming a 'major cultural force' required the foundation of the Ministry of Power. This provided a way for the tight, highly masculine unit that was Test Department to form alliances with other forces. The Ministry's most spectacular performance to date has been *The Unacceptable Face Of Freedom*, a two-hour tour de force involving music, film projection, dance, gymnastics and speech. Funded by and marking the demise of the GLC, it took place in the disused Rail Maintenance Depot at Paddington, trapped like a beached battleship amid the Westway's flyovers. Its theme was an account of the politics behind the GLC's abolition in terms of a history of British imperialism.

Test Department's chief artistic problem is their masculinity: the MoP is seen as a way of maintaining their identity while bringing in other influences to set up context and dialogue. 'Since we started working with women, we took a more extreme position,' says Brett. 'We pushed Test Department even further into making a very heavy kind of aggressive, militaristic statement. We'd be the bad guys. So we're creating a conflict within the Ministry of Power itself. There has to be a conflict for any changes to happen.'

The MoP is finding its own poverty-stricken way through politics or art. Their emphasis is on 'directly supporting people in struggle' and on forging alliances that cut across conventional lines of affiliation. There is an organic coalition politics fermenting in the space between Deptford and the ICA. □

A different view of Nicaragua from Marc Karlin at the Metro

CINEMA

Hearts of men

Judith Williamson

The Good Father (15)
Electric Screen, Renoir, Cannon
Charing Cross Rd
Voyages, The Making of a Nation, In Their Time, Changes
Metro

MEN ARE BACK in vogue. Not that they were ever exactly out of it; but in the limelight of Seventies feminism women's feelings and concerns occupied the screen for a while in a spate of films (*Girlfriends, Alice Doesn't Live Here Any More*, etc.) that attempted to explore a woman's-eye view of patriarchal relations. Whether or not these films succeeded, it was their project itself which marked the era. But since the women's movement put the politics of emotional life on the screen, men have been wanting one too: and films like *Kramer vs Kramer* and *Tootsie* have paved the way for a general preoccupation with the 'new' man. So all at once men are centre stage again — but this time with feelings.

If that seems like a vast generalisation, many films opening later this season (e.g. *Twice In a Lifetime* and one actually called *Men*) will bear it out. In France, a comedy about three men and a baby by a little-known director has been the surprise blockbuster of the year — so charming and novel is it to see men changing nappies etc. Or compare the Bob Hoskins character in *The Long Good Friday* and *Mona Lisa*, thrillers which share a brutal underworld setting: between '81 and '86 the man has softened practically to butter. He feels, he cares, he has learned to cry!

The Good Father is both a symptom of this phenomenon and, in its better moments, an investigation of it. Set in South London's down-home professional belt, the film follows the difficulties of two fathers separated from their children (conveniently, a single child in each case) and on bad terms with their ex-wives. Its scenario is similar to that of the recent TV drama *What If It's Raining?* and, besides a preoccupation with middle-class lifestyles, they share a penchant for rather whiney visual ploys like showing father and child in empty playgrounds (straining credibility to the limit when Clapham Common is deserted *every* time they go there).

However it is unfair to take the comparison beyond the symptomatic level because in other ways *The Good Father* is infinitely more interesting than the flimsy TV drama. The complexity of the script and the rounded performances of Anthony Hopkins and Roger Miles (the fathers) prevent it becoming a simple sob-story, and the cleverest aspect of its structure is the way the men's legitimate anger merges into revenge and culminates in a court action so grotesque as to shock even themselves. Two topical concerns cross over here in a way that enriches the film but foils anyone trying to claim it as a campaigning tract. It is, indeed, being used as a platform by Families Need Fathers, because part of the plot involves the Miles character's wife trying to remove their child to Australia. However it could equally be used by a lesbian mothers' campaign, as it is her lesbianism that is used to prevent her taking the child.

Having raised so many bitter and important issues, it is slightly unconvincing, if emotionally pleasing, to find that both couples arrive at satisfactory resolutions to their problems. But the film is really about men: men cutting up carrots, men falling off their motorbikes, men sitting in garages reading their ex-wives' pamphlets from the 1969 Crouch End Women's Collective. This last image has a symbolic resonance throughout the whole film: whose task is precisely to chart the reactions, changes and upheavals arising from — so to speak — the days of the Crouch End Women's Collective.

In this sense the film is about a particular generation — and a particular class. One of the joys of *The Good Father* is that in it director Mike Newell does for London in the Eighties what his *Dance with a Stranger* did for London in the Fifties (the return of London to the screen has been one of the immense pleasures of recent British films). But it does it for the London of the 'poor' middle class,

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TRAILERS

A selection of forthcoming cinema events, festivals, seasons, etc.

Nicaragua Must Survive is the title of a week of films and discussion at London's Metro cinema. Programmes include new short films from the Nicaraguan Film Institute (unfortunately unavailable for review), a debate with Carlos Chamorro, editor of *Barricada*, on 5 October and another on 8 October — further details from the Metro on 01-437 0757.

Black Cinema Season at the Brixton Ritzy continues and on 5 October John Stahl's 1934 *Imitation of Life* is the first of four bills run in conjunction with the Sankofa Film & Video collective as part of their Black (Fe'minine) Image/Imagery series — for details ring 01-831 0024. (For information on the rest of the season ring 01-737 2121.)

the bourgeoisie of Battersea and Crouch End. In one of the film's most revealing lines, father Hopkins, who has moved from his Battersea flat to a room overlooking a flyover, says of his new place, 'I can't take my son there,' and the film presents this statement as self-evident. But why? Millions of families live in rooms overlooking flyovers (including many erstwhile inhabitants of Battersea). Ultimately, though *The Good Father*'s emotional perceptions might speak to a wider audience, its practical concerns are those of that newly-important consumer class, the well-meaning, hard-done-by professionals. One of the great flaws of Seventies feminism was its failure to represent the problems of working-class women; now it seems that public focus has already 'moved on' to middle-class men. (For a completely different kind of movie about the male psyche see *Top Gun*, reviewed next week.)

The conflicts and crises of Central America have so far been brought to us by a certain kind of fiction film (the kind that stars white North Americans) and by some valuable documentary films, for the most part showing the struggle against the US. Yet the worthy documentary contains as many clichés as the Hollywood drama; a film like *Nicaragua No Pasaran*, important though its information may be, is full of clenched fists and weeping women — two sides of the same coin, and part of the same image-currency as TV news. Marc Karlin's films **The Making of a Nation**, **In Their Time** and **Changes** offer a different way of looking at post-revolutionary Nicaragua, because they neither preach to the converted, nor justify to the unconverted. Instead they ask questions: about what it is like literally to build a new society, about how it feels to recover an identity which has been systematically suppressed. Apart from **Voyages**, which seeks a way into the situation via an American photographer, Karlin's films provide a rivetting view of both the *work* and the *meaning* of a revolution; and provide a contrast with several fiction films about Central America opening soon. □

ART

Ragged end

John Spurling

Dutch Landscape: The Early Years
National Gallery
Anselm Kiefer
Saatchi Collection, 98A Boundary Road, London NW8, Friday and Saturday afternoons

'YOU CANNOT JUST paint a landscape after tanks have passed through it,' the West German artist Anselm Kiefer has said in an interview with R. H. Fuchs. 'You have to do something with it.' The National Gallery's loan exhibition of Dutch landscapes (prints, drawings and paintings) traces the early development of landscape as a subject in its own right, freed from its original role in Western art as a background to history paintings. The exhibition of 19 paintings by Kiefer in the Saatchi collection almost brings the wheel full circle: landscape has become the medium for a contemporary artist's sense of history.

Both Kiefer's work and that of the early Dutch landscapists are intimately connected with violent historical events. Kiefer was born in 1945 in the ruins of the Third Reich. The southern Netherlands in the first half of the 17th century

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Invitation to the past from Cornelis Vroom's 'View of Haarlem seen from the Spaarne' at the National Gallery

was occupied by Spanish troops, while the northern part was almost constantly at war with Spain; and it was the refugees from occupied Flanders who brought the 16th-century Antwerp landscape tradition of Patinir and Pieter Breughel the Elder to Haarlem and Amsterdam.

The tanks themselves are not often visible in Kiefer's paintings. In an early work called *Iconoclastic Controversy* three of them encircle a muddy arena (which can also be seen as the artist's palette), scribbled over with the names of mutually hostile scholars from the early Christian era. In the more recent *Operation Sealion* (named after Hitler's planned invasion of Britain) toy battleships float in a large grey bathtub, set down in the foreground of a field of swarming black and yellow furrows. But even where no weapons are visible, the traces of desecration and desolation are everywhere. Perhaps these rough textures of straw and thick paint and these greys, blacks and yellows with flickers of red or pink can be read simply as stubble-fields still smouldering after the harvest, but the titles painted in their corners suggest otherwise. One particularly black and dismal landscape is inscribed along its smoky sky with an old German song: 'Cockchafer, fly,/Your father's at the war,/Your mother's in Pomerania,/And Pomerania's burnt.'

Early Dutch landscapes mostly adopt the opposite strategy. There are occasional references to the violence of the times: a scene of travellers being attacked by bandits, the ruins of a castle destroyed by the Spanish, a series of prints showing depressed peasants and swaggering soldiers against ruined cottages and decayed fences. But on the whole these are celebrations of peace and quiet. After the idealised forests and mountains of the Flemish tradition, the naturalistic, tonal landscapes invented by Esaias van de Velde and perfected by the great Haarlem trio of De Molijn, Van Goyen and Salomon van Ruysdael must have seemed at first somewhat low-key and uninspiring, if not actually desolate. But since they were in part a response to the Calvinistic dislike of holy images and, besides, were made for an entirely new popular market of ordinary householders, they were clearly valued precisely for their qualities of sobriety and everyday reality. They were also, as Christopher Brown points out in the catalogue to his exhibition, expressions of pride in a land which had thrown off the Catholic tyranny of Spain as well as of nostalgia for a countryside which was becoming a place for townees' excursions.

In another catalogue essay, Jan de Vries discusses the many radical changes in the Dutch landscape in the early 17th century: industrial growth, land reclamation, canal construction, etc. But, however hard one tries to see these windmills and canals as the power-stations and motorways of our time, for us the element of nostalgia is inevitably uppermost. Briefly and intensely we follow a rutted track towards the skaters on an expanse of brown and white ice in Van de Neer's *Winter Landscape* or wind through an avenue of spring trees towards Haarlem in a watercolour by Cornelis Vroom or mount the low rise to *Jan Six's Bridge* with its boats seeming to sail through the fields in Rembrandt's famous etching. For us these have become true history paintings, in the sense that they invite us to inhabit a real world that no longer exists.

On the other hand, for all the signs and echoes of German history in Kiefer's landscapes, they are not strictly history paintings. They lack the safety and composure of history. It's not that they're pessimistic; on the contrary, Kiefer's inventiveness and his mastery of disparate materials — he attaches sand, lead and iron as well as handfuls of straw to his canvases — make them, in spite of their gloomy tones, strangely exhilarating. These paintings are history at its open and still ragged end, before the moral has been drawn or the account settled, a landscape we have been walking gingerly through since 1945, keeping an eye out for tanks. □

TELEVISION

Stupid Cupid

Hugo Williams

MY FRIEND LILLY'S favourite games are 'Going into the Forest', 'Going to the Disco' (including 'Getting Ready to Go to the Disco') and 'Human Chain', where you have to link up with as many people as possible, then fall over. (Some of these games sometimes overlap.) As these are my favourite games also, I wondered whether I would like her favourite TV programme, **Blind Date** (ITV), the computer dating show where a studio audience is allowed to watch a girl choose from three men, hidden from her but not the spectators, by asking them cheeky prepared questions and receiving cheeky prepared answers.

Lilly (9) said she liked questions like 'Would you tidy up my room?' but most of the questions seemed to be trick ones like 'What form of outdoor sport do you like best?' I asked her why she enjoyed the show. Was it because you got to see into people's private lives? 'No,' said Lilly, 'it's because you can see if a big fat person is sitting there and they can't see and sometimes a little man chooses a big fat lady and they have to go off to the zoo or something, but the zoo's in Germany! — then when they come back next week they look embarrassed and everything, but sometimes they're in love and they want to go on holiday together to Thailand.' Once Lilly had explained this Machiavellian aspect of the show to me I started to enjoy it more and I must say I am now hooked. Tapping into the dynamics of the human

My slow child's first steps

Rachel McCarron

How dull in his pride seems the stallion,
Bred to such predictable perfection,
Compared to you, my pup, my tousled stray.
And how much more profound are you than all
Permitted to be facile in their way;
It's indeed a precarious perch, the world,
My jittery fledgeling. And you are learned,
My sparrow, who emerged from darkest night,
So dark I could not find you, into day
And this tedium and miracle of flight —

If, in truth, it's not flight so to name your gait,
My pint-size Chaplin, my tender-legged foal.
A health to you, little inebriate,
May you never know a more sober fall!

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reproduction system with all its attendant displacement activity is a sound move for TV, which too often raises its eyes above waist level. *Blind Date* is a show ideally suited to a medium whose ultimate destiny, surely, will be to permit/oblige us to experience other people copulating almost continuously. For the time being, a little disguised *schadenfreude* will have to do.

The big deal of the week, complete with May '68-style press-kit and hurried-looking opportunism, was **Death is Part of the Process** (BBC1), an Alan Plater conversion of an early Sixties Hilda Bernstein novel about insurrection in South Africa.

It should be turned back into a novel again at the first opportunity. A sort of how-to manual for fourth-form pyromaniacs, it has plainly been concocted for international distribution and revolution on the level of *Time* magazine, Coke and disco music. Blacks aren't commercial worldwide, so most of the plotters are white and good-looking with homes and wives to go to. The blacks are sets of eyes in the night. The whites have names they call each other. (Some of them have another, secret name, for excitement purposes.) The names of the blacks you have to work out from the cast list. All the characters are strictly cartoon cut-outs, for school use only, and the political savvy was received for Christmas in 1963. Only the villains have South African accents!

'What's Shakespeare got to do with politics?' asks one constitutionally thick white mum before a performance of *Henry V* we just *know* is going to be interrupted with a big bang just as those 'busy hammers, closing rivets up, give dreadful note of preparation'. Some attempt is made to show the white pigs at home, boring on about what day they had their hair done, etc., but the hackneyed ironies of doomed white tribe behaviour were so much better dramatised by David Dimbleby, a repeat of whose 1980 **The White Tribe of Africa** (BBC2) was allowed to steal the show as a curtain-raiser, on the other side.

What happens if you're a one-parent, night-time, uninsured female minicab driver and an old Arab person dies in your back seat? Someone got a credit for having posed this rhetorical question in the credits for **Shiftwork** by Lesley Bruce, but was left out of the cast list in *Radio Times*. Wrongly, in my view, as he/she had done half the work.

Maureen Lipman shouldered the unappealing acting duties — anorak, specs, endless harsh night-driving shots and no change to phone the baby-sitter — but succeeded in twisting the piece into a half-decent play by finding somewhere in her experienced heart the one and only character who could have got into such a mess and spoken such lines, then letting circumstances go to work on her. These circumstances weren't that interesting, mind you: the bloody-minded hospital, the paranoid police station, the all-night undertakers, these were predictable episodes in the milking of a strictly one-joke problem. I mean, isn't it a bit fishy that she can't call in the police because she just happens to be uninsured? I wanted her to rob the old boy. I kept saying, 'Take his money!'

I had thought of giving the Arab corpse a rave for his dramatical abilities, but in truth his deadness left something to be desired. It was too variable — eyes alternatively open and closed, rolling and staring — for the high level of realism achieved by Lipman, though I suppose this is excusable in a live actor. In the end they dump him in the waiting room of 'The Lionel Davis Wing For Private Patients', leaving us with the rhetorical question, 'Who is Lionel Davis?' Incidentally, I was irritated to hear the rotten James Taylor/Carly Simon version of 'Mockingbird' being used as closing music instead of Charlie and Inez Fox's incomparable original. Brace up, Brenda Reid (producer) and Mike Westbrook (original music credit).

'And finally,' said Hermione Lee, interviewing Julian Barnes on **Talking to Writers** (C4), 'why do you write?' I thought she said 'Why don't you write?' for a second, but she was serious. Barnes' face registered shock, confusion, resolution and defiance. What could he say? That he did it for money? For fun? To irritate his old headmaster? Nothing like that. He looked her in the eye and said he wrote because he was afraid of dying. 'I won't say I can hear the nails being hammered into my coffin lid and I don't exactly dwell on whether the tree my coffin will be made of has been cut down yet, but . . . I think you want to build some little crenellated sand castles against the oncoming tide . . .' It gave me pause for thought. □

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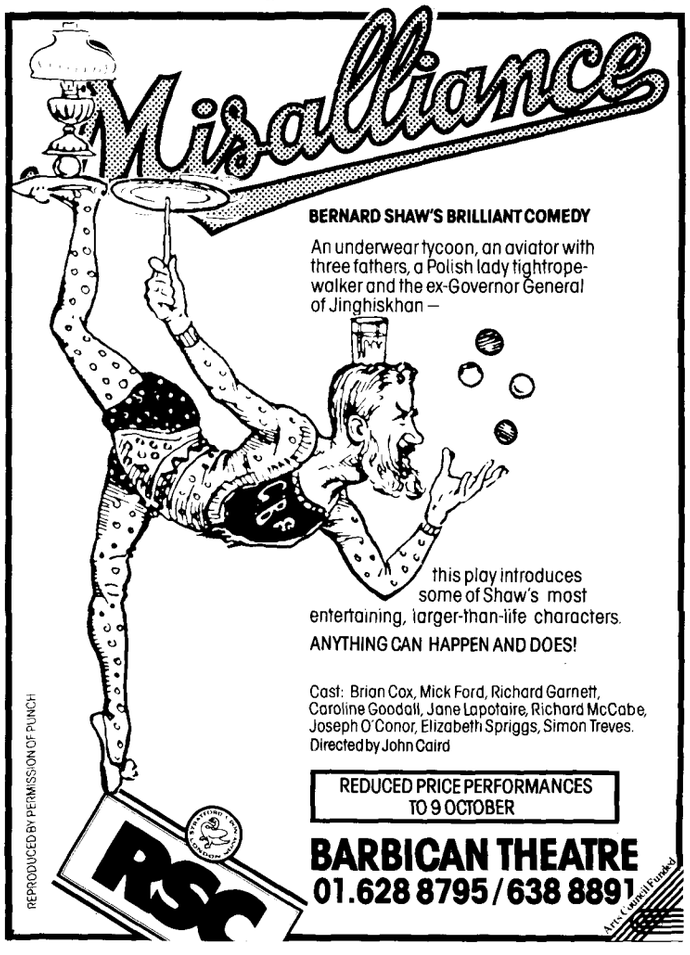
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Books

Longing for home

David Gilmour

After the Last Sky
EDWARD W. SAID *Faber* £6.95

THERE ARE BROADLY three categories of books about the Palestine question published in the West. The first claims that the Palestinians do not really exist; the second, which somewhat illogically overlaps, admits their existence but only as terrorists; the third describes their tragic history since the Balfour Declaration. Authors in the first two categories are usually American or Israeli; those in the third tend to be British, French or Arab.

There is in fact a fourth category of book, smaller than the others, which is seldom seen outside specialist bookshops. This consists of the writing of Palestinians themselves, writing which has emerged directly from the experiences of exile and occupation. It is usually passionate, moving and intensely lyrical, revealing an attachment to their land which only the dispossessed can feel. Only a Palestinian could have written Fawaz Turki's *The Disinherited* or the poems of Mahmoud Darwish. And only a Palestinian could have produced a portrait of his people's experience as Edward Said has done in *After the Last Sky*.

The author is a professor at Columbia University who built his considerable academic reputation on the study of European and American literature. Yet, as a Palestinian, he has been impelled by the suffering inflicted on his countrymen to devote most of the last 12 years to writing about the Middle East. Two of his books examined the attitudes of Western scholars and journalists towards the region, while a third dealt with the political dimension of the Palestinian question. His latest book is a much more personal attempt to put across the collective reality of the Palestinian existence, concentrating not so much on the suffering as the common statelessness, the need to prove and maintain an identity in alien surroundings. The Palestinian is always 'a person in transit', the people 'a flaw in the geometry of resettlement and exodus'.

The text, combined with Jean Mohr's powerful photographs, makes a rare emotional impact on the reader. It is partly a commentary on Mohr's images, partly a jumble of memories (the house keys and the title deeds in a battered suitcase in exile), partly a reflection on the endless and unanswerable predicament of being a Palestinian in the world today. Nearly 40 years after their exodus, many Palestinians share a sense of hopelessness, a weary scepticism about their struggle to exist as a people. And yet the struggle has to go on because they have no alternative.

Much of the force of this remarkable book comes from its painful honesty. Edward Said admits the faults and mistakes of other Arabs and of the Palestinians as well; he admits too that not all Palestinian suffering is inflicted by the Israelis. It is difficult to imagine the horrors suffered by the inhabitants of the Beirut refugee camps who, after being bombarded by Israeli guns and massacred by Lebanese Christians, have been constantly under seige by Shi'ite militiamen.

Towards the end of the book, Said describes the present political situation of the Palestinians: 'Victims of the destruction of our society, dispossessed ever since, regularly the target of genocidal intentions, we are expected meekly not to resist; in addition, we are lectured on the need to renounce violence, to stop insisting on designating our own representatives, to give up our wish to have an independent state of our own, to respond to American demands for peace.' The Reagan administration's demands of the Palestinian leadership are indeed barely credible. Only the combination of an ignorant White House, a craven Congress and an almighty Zionist lobby could have formulated them. □

Ramallah, 1984 (above left) and Hebron, 1979 (above): two pictures by Jean Mohr of a people dispossessed

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CRIME

On location

Nick Kimberley

TEN YEARS and more after the US defeat, it's not unusual to find the Vietnam war serving a variety of functions in American thrillers. It can be a means of purging communal guilt, or of salvaging national honour. Most often, it's merely a device which unleashes squadrons of vengeful and psychotic veterans who wreak havoc back home. The uses to which Vietnam has been put are not necessarily indices of the state of the American psyche, but it's easy to see why the spectre continually rises to haunt popular fiction.

It's less easy to work out why a British author, Chris Mullin, should return to the end of the Vietnam war in **The Last Man out of Saigon** (Gollancz, £9.95) but affection rather than guilt seems to be the key. Mullin was a journalist reporting from Vietnam before and after the fall of Saigon, which he re-creates in vivid detail. The last man of the title is MacShane, a CIA agent sent to Vietnam to establish a network of trouble-makers who'll maintain some sort of US intervention after the official withdrawal. He is quickly captured by the Vietnamese, who treat him well in their attempt to rehabilitate him.

Needless to say, Mullin points an accusing finger at America: one of his Vietnamese tells MacShane, 'Morally you are among the world's least developed civilisations.' This is hardly news, of course, and Mullin doesn't labour the point; he is keener to show that, despite all they suffered, the Vietnamese are a kind and happy people. Although not much happens in conventional thriller terms, *The Last Man out of Saigon* is an often moving tale of one man's redemption through contact with a better life. The debt to the more religious work of Graham Greene is underlined, not only by a passing mention in the text, but also by his generous puff printed on the cover.

Elmore Leonard's **Cat Chaser** (Viking, £9.95) retraces a different episode in US foreign policy, the invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. Twenty years after the event, an ex-Marine called George Moran returns to the ground on which he fought in an attempt to find the woman who, despite fighting on the other side, had saved his life.

Leonard spends little time worrying over the proprieties of the American invasion. Simply accepting it as yet more wrong-headedness, he is more concerned to establish the framework common to most of his novels, whether Westerns or thrillers. A decent but not entirely blameless man and a levelheaded woman find that their love is threatened by a thug whose willingness to commit utmost mayhem can be stopped by murder alone. This thug in all his guises is a sort of wild card whose presence opens up possibilities without which Leonard's novels might flounder on their own moral ambiguities.

In Leonard's fiction the violence which pollutes ordinary lives must be met with an equivalent act. This may not leave much room to build a better world, but it does make for superb thrillers in which women are noticeably less dumb than usual, even if men are not noticeably more vulnerable.

THE CARSONS, a middle-aged and wealthy couple, are left childless when their daughters are killed in a car accident. Trapped in an unsatisfactory marriage, the wife invents a son whose life she gradually fleshes out with imaginary detail. The husband, fearing imprisonment for financial misbehaviour, plans a fake kidnapping of his fake son in order to get his hands on money which is otherwise out of his reach. In the hands of Patricia Highsmith, such a plot would develop into a sombre and worrying excavation of the dark side of marriage and parenthood. But the plot isn't Highsmith's, it's Michael Innes', and **Carson's Conspiracy** (Penguin, £2.25) is more of a jovial romp than a psychological probe in the Highsmith style.

Like the rest of the dozens of Appleby books which have kept Innes busy for decades, it displays immaculate syntax alongside a quizzical amusement at the holes people dig themselves into. The urbane and unshockable Appleby saunters in Carson's footsteps without ever taking on the appearance of a dreadful Nemesis. The dash of ethereal mysticism which permeates Innes' earliest and best novels *(Operation Pax, Hamlet Revenge!)* is missing from *Carson's Conspiracy* which nevertheless manages to entertain — even if the impression remains that Innes writes to amuse himself rather than us.

John Lear's **Death in Leningrad** (Pluto £8.95 & £3.95) won the Pluto Crime Prize for the novel which best married politics and the thriller. Like the Mullin novel already mentioned, it is first and foremost a loving portrait of a country (or a city in this case) and its people, and a condemnation of the foul world which spoils it. Lear's affection for and knowledge of Leningrad is almost overbearing: every tiny observation and aside shows how perceptive he is. Having spent so long establishing Leningrad as somewhere real, he finds himself rushed to tie up his plot; bodies drop like flies while motives remain obscure. Nevertheless *Death in Leningrad* is an intelligent spy novel whose attention to detail is a mark of its author's seriousness. □

FICTION

Art of sex

Geoff Dyer

The Bachelors' Bride
STEPHEN KOCH *Marion Boyars* £10.95

MORE CRITICAL ink has been spilt over Duchamp's 'The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even' than any other 20th-century work of art. Given the construction's power to lure and baffle, any novel that arranges itself like a lock around this Duchampian key is unlikely to be a simple affair.

Clever and compelling, *The Bachelors' Bride* is both dissertation and novel — or, more exactly, a novel about the writing of a dissertation. Narrator of one and author of the other, Jason Phillips is a young art historian on the fringes of the 1960s New York art world trying to polish off his thesis on Duchamp. 'The Beatles were at their height and the Supremes were in their wigs' — and Jason is busy gatecrashing parties. At one of them he meets Mel Dworkin, an artist who is soon to make a name for himself as one of the Warholian artist-superstars of the period. Jason becomes part of Mel's entourage and, by the time downtown bohemia gives way to international acclaim, he is close enough to him to fall victim not only to the jealousies and conflicts caused by Mel's success but also to the increasing egomania of the artist himself.

The Bachelors' Bride looks like being one thing and then becomes another; in the end it's several things at once: the story of an uncertain quest for sexual identity, an evocation of the SoHo art world, an evolving group portrait that is also a miniature history of the period. Koch has all the necessary skills to do this novelistic business pretty effortlessly but it is his larger ambitions that both cause him trouble and constitute the novel's chief interest — for, in the process of generating its themes, the book's ability to elaborate them

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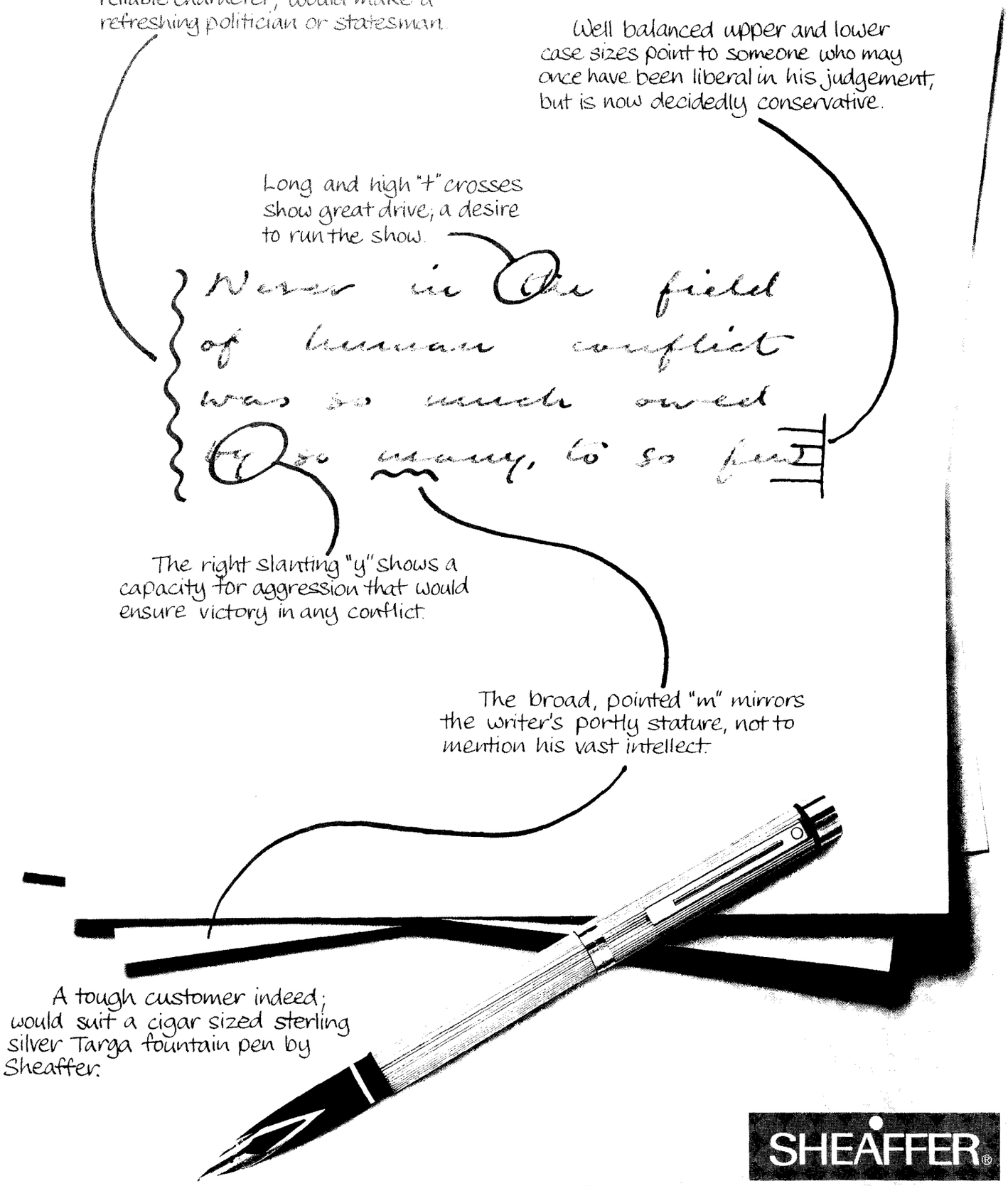

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cogently becomes thwarted. The problem is implicit in the conception of the novel. Jason is a critic; he is reproached throughout for his ability to explain things away and his inability to act, to live. Koch has a similar difficulty in reconciling the claims of analysis and action. Lengthy dissertations and lectures from Jason on Duchamp and the cult of Woman, Duchamp and androgyny and so on are intercalated into the text but are never quite *absorbed* into the action of the story.

Jason's critical thinking tends toward the schematic but his own experience in the novel stubbornly resists schematisation: or, rather, the key to this scheme is always felt to lie in the enigmatic riddle of 'The Bride Stripped Bare'. Full of shifting, 'precarious' sexual allegiances and impulses as the novel is, it becomes difficult to tell bachelors from brides in the thematic scheme of things.

These multiple ambiguities are fascinating but they eat into the novel's momentum — so much so that the violent climax is relayed to us not through direct narrative but via competing hypotheses as to what might have happened. The action of the novel has, if you like, dissolved completely into the riddle of interpretation — which is perhaps the natural destiny of a novel inspired by 'The Bride Stripped Bare'. □

Chinese puzzle

Jonathan Mirsky

The Cambridge History of China: Vol 13, pt 2, Republican China 1912-1949.
ed. JOHN KING FAIRBANK and ALBERT FEUERWERKER *Cambridge* £60

IN 1966, WHEN John King Fairbank, Harvard professor of Chinese history, began planning *The Cambridge History of China,* his aim was 'to provide a substantial account of the history of China . . . an account of the current state of knowledge in six volumes'. Like every other foreign plan for or about China this turned out to be a gigantic underestimation of the problem: 20 years on, five volumes of about 1,000 pages each have emerged, but there are now ELEVEN yet to come. Only one volume as yet deals with China before 1800.

It is not for nothing that Fairbank, now emeritus, is known in American Chinese studies as The King. The creator of the mighty American army of sinologists, like Deng Xiaoping he has established his successors in the major universities and colleges and drawn leading scholars from abroad to what is now called the Fairbank Centre at Harvard. He and his general co-editor, Denis Twitchett — then of Cambridge, now moved to Princeton — have assembled the best and the brightest from American universities, Japan, France and Taiwan, and persuaded them to perform two difficult tasks: to write essays on the major questions in Chinese history, summarising the latest research and scholarly disputes, and to keep their own voices in order to avoid a torpor-inducing homogeneity.

Big questions about China are important in America. Some lay behind the McCarthy purges of the 1950s. Who 'lost' China: the inept Nationalists of Chiang Kaishek, or, as McCarthy charged, the Communist-infiltrated State Department, which discouraged policy-makers from supporting the doughty Red-hating Chiang and his splendid Christian wife? Fairbank himself, who during the war had served in China, was accused of being a 'Com-symp', as the phrase went in those days, and denied a passport for years.

A related question is whether either the Nationalists or the Communists fought the Japanese very hard during the long occupation, or were keeping their powder dry to slug it out with each other once the Americans had forced the Emperor to his knees.

And what about Mao Zedong: did he win because his enemies were so inept, or because he really did offer something new? And, in any event, is Mao Zedong Thought, as it is still known in China, really a great addition to the corpus of Marx-Leninism?

These questions are part of what Fairbank and his collaborator on this volume, Albert Feuerwerker, the eminent economic historian at the University of Michigan, call 'the titanic drama of the Chinese revolution . . . hardly known as yet to the English-reading public, though in the 21st century it will be seen in retrospect as a major event of modern times'. Nor did the questions — and their answers — cause disorder only in Fifties America; they agitate Chinese today. The causes of Chinese poverty are no longer automatically attributed to imperialist exploitation in Peking. Chiang Kaishek is being reappraised as a patriot on the mainland (that sounds good on Taiwan) and Mao's views have been divided into his Thought, which is highly praised, and his thinking, much of which is now acknowledged to have been dangerously wrong.

In his chapter on the pre-communist agrarian system, Ramon Myers of the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, who has long maintained that imperialism did not distort the 19th-century Chinese economy, asserts that, while late dynastic China was still relatively prosperous, many Chinese recognised already that the failure to modernise agriculture was storing up trouble for the immediate future. By the 1920s, Myers shows, China was becoming increasingly dependant on foreign food grains as production stagnated.

Natural disasters, civil war and the Japanese occupation, which in China began in the early Thirties, led to immense suffering. This is vividly described by Lloyd Eastman of Illinois who notes, for example, that, while Chinese peasants were eating each other during the great famines of the early Forties, 8,000,000 soldiers, half the entire Nationalist Army, simply disappeared, dead of hunger, wounds and disease, or deserted.

Neither Chiang nor Mao wholly committed their forces to the anti-Japanese struggle. Each waited for the Americans to do the job, while fighting just enough battles to be seen to be patriotic. As Eastman says, however, Chiang 'persevered for 8 long years against an enemy who possessed a vast technological superiority . . . forcing the Japanese to maintain an army of about one million men in China'.

An insight into present strains between Peking and Moscow is provided by the nature of Stalin's aid to China. Between 1937 and 1939 the USSR supplied 1,000 planes, 2,000 pilots, 500 military advisors and great stores of supplies to the Nationalists. Practically nothing went to Mao's forces.

Stuart Schram of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, the leading Mao expert in the West, has studied the rapidly expanding corpus of documentation on the Chairman emerging from China as it becomes possible to consider him as a mere mortal. A patriot, a believer in action and physical prowess all his life, and a voracious reader (who saw to the doctoring of his own successive republications so as to appear eternally all-wise), Mao is seen by Schram as unique for his early (essentially non-marxist) views on the revolutionary potential and role of China's peasants. Mao, says Schram, 'promoted grass-roots participatory democracy on a larger scale than any other revolutionary leader of modern times'. But, he sums up, Mao's idea of a strong state 'was something very like an autocracy . . . in which he . . . remained in the last analysis the arbiter'.

It is a comment on the state of British sinology that, of the 56 chapters in the five published volumes of the *CHC*, only one, by Stuart Schram, an American, is by a member of a British academic department. □

Blind justice

Chris Mullin

Murder at the Farm
PAUL FOOT *Sidgwick* £12.95

ON THE AFTERNOON of 19 September 1978, 13-year-old Carl Bridgewater was found murdered in the living-room of a Staffordshire farm house. He had been on his newspaper round after school and had been shot at close range with a shotgun.

The cold-blooded killing caused widespread outrage. It was assumed that Carl had interrupted a burglary at Yew Tree Farm and that the burglar or burglars had panicked and shot him. Just why it should have been necessary to kill the boy was unclear, unless of course Carl had recognised his killer.

A massive search was started. Many witnesses claimed to have seen a blue car in the vicinity of the farm around the time of the killing. One said he had seen a blue Vauxhall Viva driven by a man wearing some sort of uniform turning into the road leading to the farm.

The trail eventually led to Hubert Vincent Spencer, an ambulance driver. Mr Spencer was a very promising suspect. He wore a uniform; he collected antiques (said to have been the motive for the raid on the farm); he had owned a shotgun; he knew Yew Tree Farm; and, for five years, he had lived only three doors down from Carl Bridgewater's family. Clearly Mr Spencer had a few questions to answer, yet suddenly the police lost interest. ▷

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They lost interest because, on 20 November 1978, another robbery took place at a farmhouse less than an hour's drive away in circumstances strongly resembling the one in which Carl Bridgewater had been killed. This time there was more to go on. Before long three minor gangsters, Vincent and Michael Hickey, Jimmy Robinson and a fourth man, Pat Molloy, were helping police with their inquiries. From the beginning the police assumed that the two farmhouse robberies were connected. So, having satisfied themselves that they had the perpetrators of the second robbery, they set about 'proving' that the same people were guilty of the first — and of the murder of Carl Bridgewater.

Before long the police had persuaded Pat Molloy (who had nothing to do with either robbery) to sign a statement admitting that he and the others had committed the Carl Bridgewater robbery.

They then had to demolish some pretty strong alibis — the Director of Public Prosecutions lent a hand by withholding inconvenient statements from the defence — and, before they knew where they were, the four men found themselves convicted of killing Carl Bridgewater.

But the case would not lie down. Four weeks after the trial a farmer living next door to the scene of the original crime was murdered with a shotgun. This time the killer was caught red-handed. It was, you'll never guess, Hubert Spencer, the ambulance driver at first suspected of killing Carl Bridgewater.

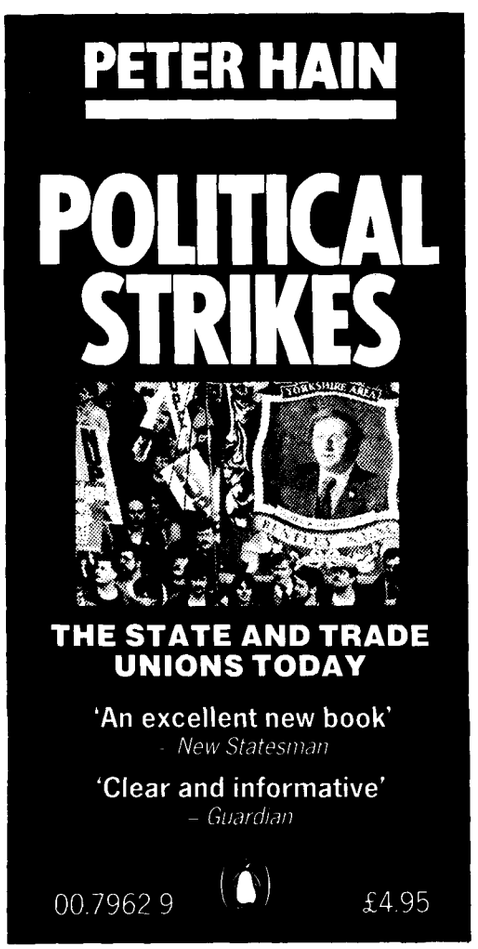
The coincidence seemed too much for everyone except the judges, the Home Office and the police. Despite a formidable campaign, during the course of which no less than four of the original prosecution witnesses have changed their evidence, three of the four men (Molloy is dead) remain in jail still protesting their innocence.

As ever Paul Foot has done a marvellous job in guiding his readers through the byzantine complexities of this case. It is a case where many lesser journalists might fear to tread. There are no heroes. None of the men unjustly sentenced was a particularly attractive character, although they have grown in adversity.

As usual, lawyers come out badly, with the honourable exception of a young solicitor called Tony Fryer. The hero is undoubtedly Michael Hickey's mother, Ann Whelan, whose single-minded determination kept the case alive when all seemed lost.

There are, however, lessons for all those concerned with the administration of justice. The first is that, although very little evidence is required to put innocent people in the frame, once they are in a great deal of evidence is required to get them out. The second lesson concerns the gullibility and bias of the judges. So many of our judges are willing to gloss over the most glaring inconsistencies — and sometimes to provide explanations of which not even the prosecution have thought — in the interests of maintaining convictions. Jimmy Robinson, one of the four convicted men, puts this better than anyone. He wrote:

> Knowing I'm innocent . . . gives me a perverse kind of gloating feeling that, for all their high-sounding words and legal jargon and the smug and clever arguments they have trotted out, they're thick as shite and still wrong. □



FICTION

Aerobatics

Alison Hennegan

Staring at the Sun
JULIAN BARNES *Cape* £9.95

ONE QUESTION and one image have haunted Jean Serjeant for most of her 99 years. First, the question. 'The mink', said the caption to the ferocious picture of trappers which adorned her childhood's bedroom wall, 'is excessively tenacious of life'. Why?

The image is provided by 'Sun-Up' Prosser, an RAF pilot grounded and billeted with the Serjeants in 1941. To the 19-year-old Jean he describes a moment of personal wonder so intense that his efforts to recapture it will lead indirectly to his death, a moment of such intricately woven meanings that Jean will spend her life attempting to unravel them. Flying home from a 'poaching' expedition (trapping German pilots as they relax a moment too soon in sight of their own landing strips), Prosser sees the sun rise over the Channel. Dropping 10,000 feet, he's astounded to see it rise again. It was 'an ordinary miracle he would never forget'. To that apparent contradiction — the ordinary nature of the miraculous, the miraculousness of the ordinary — Jean, and her son, will return again and again.

It is, after all, mainly a matter of definition. Who defines what and whom and why? Jean's is, seemingly, a very 'ordinary' life, unusual only in its length ('only'?), a long sentence broken only by the traditional punctuation of women's lives: loss of virginity, marriage, maternity, widowhood. Yet Jean eludes definition as wife, mother, widow. The experiences shape her life but do not contain its essence. As a bride, she battles with sexual ignorance (deepened rather than relieved by the florid imagery of Marie Stopes and *Married Love*) and wrestles with dutch caps possessed of their own malign life as they ping across bathroom floors and ricochet off walls but never, never nestle safely, or comfortably, where they should. The pregnancy which should have crowned her marriage comes, at last, to end it. Choosing to raise her child alone confines her to the round of cheap lodgings and dead-end jobs dictated by the hopelessly inadequate education deemed suitable for her sex and class. Because it's she who left her marriage she lives in constant fear that her husband will forcibly reclaim Gregory, their son: terror of detection enforces a life as carefully camouflaged as Prosser's aeroplane, as perilous and tenaciously preserved as the mink's.

All this, you might think, is the familiar raw material of a modern conventional form, the female and feminist *Pilgrim's Progress*. Rachel, Gregory's lover, certainly tries hard in the Seventies to convince Jean that she should interpret her past and envisage her future in those terms.

Jean resists. The truths and qualities which concern her are coloured by gender but ultimately, she believes, transcend it. Traditionally, courage is demanded of men in battle, of women in childbed and of both of them in the hour of their death, but it is courage itself which fascinates her.

Men and women may shanghai Reason to serve their frequently conflicting self-interests, but that is less interesting, less fruitful to consider than the nature and limitations of a world ruled solely by reason.

Neither she nor Julian Barnes underestimates the part played by gender in influencing the questions asked, the answers received. Both he and she constantly use pungently perceptive phrases which show they understand that: 'She didn't have the confidence for self-pity; she merely felt forlorn.' Feminist jokes, arguments, ripostes and grafitti are embedded in the fabric of the book, striking a strangely familiar note in this very 'literary' novel: 'Women were brought up to believe that men were the answer. They weren't. They weren't even one of the questions.'

In part, transcending gender is made easier for Jean — for Julian Barnes who's creating her, too — because she has transcended sex. She always found it funny, as in ha-ha. Peculiar, too, in the extent to which others invest it with essential meaning. With the end of her marriage (in which they'd agreed to 'be spontaneous on Wednesdays and Saturdays') came the end of sex. And sex, for Jean, was only ever sex. Rachel may argue passionately for the existence of sexuality and the politics arising from it, but Jean declines to be persuaded. With sex solved, she and Julian Barnes are free to pursue other (older?) verities: trying to

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decide whether they're eternal or not is part of the pursuit.

In an enormously skilful performance which irresistibly invites comparison with Prosser's aerobatics, Barnes keeps the novel circling round his central cluster of key words and images. Red and black, the colour of Prosser's night-flight world, are also the colours of birth and death and they thread their way through the book. Flight itself is many-meaninged: soaring aspiration, cowardly retreat, necessary escape, a defiance of nature explicable by natural laws. Tackling the largest questions (why *is* the mink excessively tenacious of life? And, *after* life, what?), Barnes plays: seemingly, but only seemingly, without effort. Expectations are constantly confounded: the cliché triumphantly spotted on the horizon slips away as the plot banks and turns. So many exhilarating and satisfying flights of fancy. □

PAPERBACKS

Cradle to grave

Jane Miller

ODD ASSUMPTIONS are made by the writers of 'Lives', not least that everyone ought to average no more than one apiece and that, with a little honesty and hard graft, it should be possible to scrutinise that life, chart it, know it and possess it, as though making an ordnance survey map.

Anthony Summers is praised for the meticulous research which delivered 'breakthrough evidence' for his **Goddess, the Secret Lives of Marilyn Monroe** (Sphere, £3.95). 'Dogged persistence' and 'sober conviction' make him an historian, where Norman Mailer is a hagiographer, not to say fantasist.

Monroe, though, thought it 'nice to be included in people's fantasies' and less nice answering questions of either a gynaecological or an emotional kind. This has provoked the sleuth in Summers, who rewards her prevarications by giving her extra and secret lives (which is not such a good thing as you might think). By eschewing fantasy and nosing out fact he has found more than one man to testify that Monroe was 'a lousy lay' and 'a prick-tease', and they were men whose claims to 'horizontal triumph' and 'bedroom prowess' have been checked.

The book includes some ugly photographs, one of them of Monroe dead. She is plain, mottled, slack from the slicings of a post-mortem. There are also pictures which are alight with pleasure in her own health and beauty. We are expected to sneer at human frailty, vanity, narcissism, but it is easy to feel as punished as Monroe has been by these terrible books about her. The men who write them find it hard to decide whether they hate beautiful women more or less than they hate the rest of us. Perhaps it is that which still makes it hard to hold a hand out to Monroe in commiseration and embarrassment.

You might think **The Other Half** (Hamish Hamilton, £6.95) was about wives or women or even just other people. I was actually hoping for a little cross-dressing. No such luck. This is the second volume of Kenneth Clark's autobiography, a tale of ceaseless achievement and praise punctuated by brief but significant meetings with persons we have all of us heard of. There is a good scene where his wife becomes hysterical during a visit to Ezra Pound and a funny bit about how much he liked women, provided they were Vivien Leigh or Edith Sitwell. Unmitigated excellence can be daunting, even when we are privileged to hear of it from the horse's mouth. I blushed to read the line 'if the reader will forgive me for taking myself seriously for once'. Will I forgive him?

If things run pretty smoothly for the first-rate, things also, biographers assume, run in families; while a third assumption is that those years hidden away from biographers (or not spent up at Cambridge) may be regarded as 'lost'. W.W. Bartley III's **Wittgenstein** (Cresset Library, £5.95) concentrates on the six years when Wittgenstein taught in Austrian village schools and was ejected from one of them for actually outdoing the already quite enthusiastic child-beaters. Those 'lost' years are linked to Wittgenstein's homosexual life, as are his philosophical preoccupations. The author is embattled on this point, and not, I think, benignly. He resents those uncooperative silences and secrecies. Wittgenstein had three older brothers who killed themselves and who may have been homosexual. This is dealt with as a family trait or kind of contagion. How could a family survive such a tragedy? I wonder. Bartley does not tell us how Wittgenstein did.

Talking of Cambridge, Rosamond Lehmann once wrote that Cambridge had 'disliked and distrusted her and all other females', which I always thought was about right. So it's a shock to find Eleanor Bron and Arianna Stassinopoulos writing fondly of their times there in a book called **My Cambridge** (Robson Books, £4.95). It's less surprising to find it from Muriel Bradbrook; she has spent most of her life there and is part of Cambridge and its history. For some of us Cambridge was more of an underpass or bus shelter.

My Oxford (Robson Books, £4.95) puts more stress on getting drunk, though there is an endearing admission by Martin Amis that he worked his arse off to get the 'formal' first which he regularly (and now understandably) announces that he got. Other writers from Oxford are anxious to insist on the youth, silliness and idleness of those days. There is little reason to doubt this.

In **The Missing Will** (Hogarth, £4.50) Michael Wharton (who is 'Peter Simple' of the *Telegraph* and was Michael Nathan of Bradford) has a 'lamentable' career at Oxford. This is *de rigueur* for a 'Tory anarchist' of his generation, the first step in a rite of passage (the second is writing scripts for the old BBC Features department) between the precocities of childhood and his current public role as 'state-registered melancholic'. Hating progress has been his main thing. He feels there has been altogether too much of it about. There are some who have found the application of this view to South Africa and other spots warmly human and endearing, as he does himself. You risk being thought humourless if you don't too.

Marion Milner starts from the difficulties of living a life at all, let alone knowing or writing about it. 'It was as if my mind were some mud-worm which usually, in my everday perception, burrowed just beneath the surface, but which could on occasion raise its head and emerge into air and daylight.' That naturalist's precision and lucidity characterise Milner's strange autobiographical project, in which she taught herself to distinguish between 'blind thought' and thinking which watches, records and might 'assist in real present-day problems' and even perhaps constitute the condition for moments of happiness.

She began a diary when she was 26 and newly graduated in psychology. Later she trained and worked as a psychoanalyst. Virago have reissued **A Life of One's Own** (£4.50, first published in 1934) and its sequel, **An Experiment in Leisure** (£4.50). Both chart her restless, painful struggle to describe the themes and movement of her interior life and her attempts to intervene and control it. Quotations from Defoe, Conrad, Montaigne remind us of varieties of solitary thinking — from minute observation of physical activity to forms of self-analysis and auto-didacticism — which have influenced her. A sort of thesis emerges, involving notions of 'male' and 'female' modes of thought and their necessary interdependence. This was something of a let-down: universalist, unspecific, oddly resistant to historical and cultural explanation, conciliatory. But the enterprise, watchful, intricate, brave and meticulously honest, is nonetheless remarkable, and there are more volumes to come. □

Jane Miller's most recent book, Women Writing about Men, *is published by Virago. She teaches at the Institute of Education.*

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It all adds up

Terry Tastard, London W2
Your record reviewer Charles Fox (*NS* 26 Sept.) accuses a South African group of poor arithmetic by calling themselves District Six when they comprise only five players. The answer is simple: they have probably named themselves after a famous Coloured area of Cape Town, District Six, which throbbed with life. But it was surrounded by white areas. So the whites drove the Coloureds out, and have turned its homes into bijou town houses. Another item for the accounts on the day of reckoning.

Clapped not cheered

Andrew Knight, Daily Telegraph
For history and the cuttings file, may I correct the first paragraph of Nick Faith's *Sunday Times* story (*NS* 12 Sept.)

Nobody 'cheered' when I told the Monday editorial conference at *The Economist* of Andrew Neil's appointment to be editor of the *Sunday Times*. Not a single shout. There was some clapping and an audible collective intake of breath: the news was as unexpected as it was impressive.

Yes, some of Andrew Neil's colleagues were glad he was going, and said so after the meeting. He knows his mind, and has never minded enemies. But there were many more just proud and pleased about his achievement, and they included those who had crossed swords with him or were relieved to see him go.

For *The Economist* as a whole, it was a plain loss.

Sir rules OK

Andrew Smith, St John's School, nr Leatherhead, Surrey
I am thoroughly disgusted with a complaint made against Mr Keith Norman's entry to one of your recent weekend competitions. Now you must let the poor guy off. He is a latin master in a little prep school near Wimborne, Dorset and he has to teach a load of little monsters saying 'what a jolly day it is today Sir' and 'it's said' all the time. And the fact that he writes his entries at 3 o'clock in the morning does tend to affect the brain after a while so personally I reckon that he should be knighted for such deeds while you lot sit around criticising the poor bloke. No wonder he's going insane.

Limited experience

Geoffrey Goodman, former Asst Editor and Industrial Editor, Mirror Group Newspapers
Trivialisation in press coverage is by no means confined to British industrial affairs. The malady spreads across the entire field of what tabloid editors (and proprietors) call 'serious' or 'heavy' news and features. The working journalists in political, diplomatic, economic, foreign as well as industrial affairs are all affected by the decline of the British press into the most frenetic competitive jungle-like atmosphere we have seen since the end of World

Misunderstanding tax: *Frank Field MP replies to Dick Taverne*

Dick Taverne's article (*NS* 26 Sept) can be boiled down to a single proposition. Both Labour and the SDP talk about ending poverty but Labour's plans — based on universal benefits going to rich and poor alike — are fatally flawed. No government would be able to raise enough money to finance the proposals. The SDP plans, on the other hand, which are based on selective help, are the only practical option open to combatting poverty.

In one sense Dick Taverne is right about his party's proposals. An Alliance government could put its welfare reforms onto the Statute Book. But despite the bland assertions of confidence there are major difficulties in the way of operating these proposals.

Given Murphy's Law — if it can go wrong it will — a starting point for welfare reforms should be to keep the merging of the tax and social security system off the agenda. What is crucial is for a Chancellor's tax policy to work in unison rather than against a government's welfare objectives. There is no reason why this cannot be done while keeping both systems separate.

It is the merging with the tax system which makes the SDP proposals new. Taxes and benefits are to be combined. Everyone will receive an income tax form, fill it in, and return it. Yet even this task is not as easy as it sounds. The Revenue has no idea, for example, how many forms it issues to employers about fringe benefits; nor has it a clue on how many are returned.

The SDP is silent on whether it envisages a move to self-assessment, with stringent checks on a quota of returns, or if it intends the present tax machinery to continue. The plain fact is that an unreorganised Inland Revenue will not be able to cope with the new scheme, and a fundamental review of the Revenue will take a great deal of time. Not only will the tax forms have to be issued and collected, but they will need to be checked for their accuracy. The information on them will then be used to work out entitlement to the new benefit system.

The benefit reforms were proposed by the SDP at the last election. The plan is to abolish the supplementary benefit system. In its place will come what is called a Basic Benefit, substantial increases in child benefit and a revamping of the invalid care allowance into a carer's benefit.

The Basic Benefit will also replace the family income supplement — or the family credit as the new scheme will be called under the Fowler reforms. And it is here that one gets the first inkling that the SDP doesn't fully understand the present social security system nor, more surprisingly, its own proposals.

The SDP talks of the family credit as being 'paid with wages'. While that was scheduled under the original Fowler proposals, the government accepted before Parliament disappeared for the summer that this benefit should be paid to mothers, rather than through the wage packet.

I suppose anyone can be forgiven for not understanding the Fowler reforms — after all, the Secretary of State has put in a number of very convincing performances on this front. It is a much more serious matter though when it becomes clear that the SDP doesn't understand how its own proposals will work. To the SDP's credit they propose a major improvement in benefits for those who have been conscripted into the dole queues to fight Thatcher's war against inflation. But the proposal to allow a much enhanced child benefit to be kept by the unemployed, and not set against the dole as it is at present, will decrease the incentive to work rather than, as the SDP claims, to increase it.

The SDP claims that its scheme will abolish the poverty trap and thereby also have a beneficial effect on incentives for the low paid. But the proposal will only abolish the poverty trap in the technical sense that no low paid worker will face a marginal tax rate of more than 100 per cent. The effect of abolishing national insurance contributions, and combining them into the income tax system, together with the loss of the Basic Benefit as income increases, gives a marginal tax rate of 81 per cent — a cool 21 percentage points above the rate faced by top earners today. So much, then, for dealing with the problem of the disincentives faced by low wage earners.

Nor is it as obvious as it was that the merging of national insurance contributions into the income tax rate will be beneficial to the poor. The Lawson reforms of reduced rates of national insurance contributions for the lower paid make the gains of abolishing this tax, but putting the charge on income tax, more problematical. Whether this move is beneficial to the poor depends on where the tax threshold will be pitched under the SDP proposals. The whole package of reform is largely to be paid for by the abolition of the married man's tax allowance. This affects, therefore, the threshold of couples, and the taxing of child benefit, which is also proposed, has a similar effect on the level of tax-free income of households with children.

The SDP proposal that once child benefit is raised to an adequate level it should be taxed is, of course, right. The party deserves full marks for saying so very clearly and for using the additional revenue gained thereby to help finance the child benefit increase. But such a move makes the levels at which income is taxed an even more crucial one than it is under the present system.

Pointing out the flaws in the SDP package doesn't mean that Labour's poverty proposals are beyond criticism. Our plans do not fully make good the Tory cuts in pensions and other benefits. The party's benefit costs are all askew, and we have no plans whatsoever to begin reshaping the welfare state which will see a phasing-out of means tested support.

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War II. Much of it has little to do with new technology or modernising publishing systems — though this is the excuse usually proffered.

Philip Bassett's piece (*NS* 5 Sept.) gave a quite misleading account of the 'new trends' in industrial coverage — which he suggested were being set up by his own paper, the *Financial Times*. Many of us, years ago, similarly pioneered various forms of industrial coverage even in the much-despised popular newspapers (including the *Daily Mirror* etc) long after we had moved away from the old (and possibly accurate at the time) label of 'strike reporters'.

Philip Bassett may, of course, not realise this; there is nothing terribly wrong in suffering from the magnificent arrogance of limited experience. But it is important that *New Statesman* readers should have the record set straight.

John F. Spellar, National Secretary, Mainstream
Philip Bassett's article makes the alarming claim that there no longer a story in the unions. This can only be true from a very narrow perspective. There are dramatic changes taking place, as was evident from this year's Congress, compared with its predecessors. The difference in tone and content of the Congress was quite remarkable and reflected changes that are taking place, not only on the national political scene, but also in the internal transformation of unions.

Similarly the often bizarre events in TASS are of human interest, if nothing else. The domination of that union's outlook by the *Morning Star* philosophy is of great interest, particularly in the light of a possible incorporation of ASTMS. Yet again only the *London Standard* seems to be taking a major interest in this story.

To write these stories might require more work, it might also upset some relationships, but they are undoubtedly newsworthy and they might put the industrial correspondents back on the front page.

For the record

Frances Ellery, Outwrite Women's Newspaper
Following a number of queries, we would like to make clear to your readers that the Libertarian Feminists' conference was not advertised, or in any way promoted, in *Outwrite*, as may have been implied in Sarah Benton's article (*NS* 19 Sept.). The notice referred to was in fact an article alerting our readers to the true nature of the Association of Libertarian Feminists, titled 'Fascists in Feminist Clothing'.

Information wanted

Liz Ottaway, Research Associate, Cartoon Centre, University of Kent, Canterbury CT2 7NU
I am currently involved in a project to write a book about the cartoonist Vicky (Victor Weisz, 1913-1966) and also to prepare a retrospective exhibition of his original artwork (to be held in late 1987 at the National Portrait Gallery, London).

I would be most grateful to readers who contact me with information — either archive material, personal reminiscences or original drawings that they are prepared to lend to the exhibition.

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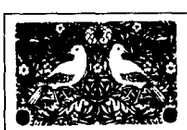

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AWARD

FRANK COUSINS
TGWU PEACE AWARD

The Transport and General Workers' Union invites applications for the **1986 Frank Cousins' Peace Prize**.

The aim of the scheme is to assist with research, travel or other projects which promote peace, disarmament and/or arms conversion. *The award is worth* £2,000.

Applications from individuals or organisations, should be made in writing, detailing the exact way in which the award would be used. They will be judged by a panel comprised of representatives of the TGWU and prominent personalities from the labour and peace movements.

Applications should be sent to:

Regan Scott
Secretary to the Award Panel
TGWU
Transport House
Smith Square, London SW1.

CLOSING DATE:
31 October 1986.

AGENDA

MON 6 OCT

LONDON HISTORY WORKSHOP SEMINAR. 'Political Organisation Among India's Dalits (ex-Untouchables) in the 20th century'. Speaker: Ian Duncan. 7.30 pm, upstairs at The White Swan, New Row, WC2. Collection.

THAILAND: TEN YEARS ON. Democracy & development 10 years after the 6 October coup d'état. Public meeting organised by Inside Asia magazine. 7 pm. Quaker International Centre, 1 Byng Place, WC1 (opposite Dillons). Admission free.

TUES 7 OCT

MAPAM SOCIALIST-ZIONIST GROUP. Brian Gould MP, Opposition Front Bench Spokesperson on Trade, on 'Socialism and Freedom' at 8 pm, Hashomer House, 37a Broadhurst Gardens, London NW6.

WED 8 OCT

STOPPING THE HOLOCAUSTS: the East-West Arms Race and Poverty and Exploitation in the Southern Countries. Speakers: Bruce Kent (CND), George Galloway (War on Want). St. Anne's Church Hall, Salusbury Road, NW6. 8 pm. (Queens Park tube).

THURS 9 OCT

NUCLEAR WASTE. The answer to NIREX. Speakers: Nick Butler, Chris Smith MP. Grafton House, Newland, Lincoln, 7.30pm. Org by Lincoln Labour Party (0522) 28041.

SAT 11 OCT

ROSA LUXEMBURG & KARL LIEBKNECHT: Revolution, Remembrance, Representation. Seminar 12 noon with May Stevens, John A. Walker and others, at the Pentonville Gallery, 4 Whitfield Street, London W1. Exhibition continues through 22 Nov. Free admission. Enqs 01-482 2948.

SOCIAL ASPECTS OF AIDS. A conference for all interested in social dimensions of HIV infections and AIDS. Speakers: Keith Alcorn, Tony Coxon, Julian Meldrum, Ken Plummer, Hugh Robertson, Simon Watney, Kaye Wellings, Tony Whitehead, Tony Vass. Venue: Bristol Polytechnic 10am-6pm. Details: 0272 741251 (Peter Aggleton or Hilary Homans).

WOMEN'S LABOUR HERITAGE. 11am-3 pm, Corner House, Charlbury, Oxfordshire. Discussions with Irene Wagner, Florence Davy, Christine Collete. 'Bring & Share' lunch. Women welcome. Great Tew 624.

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SISTREN SONG.
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Monday, October 6, 8.30 pm
Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2

Refreshments will be provided

AGENDA
£5 for 25 words
plus 30p extra
words (inc VAT)

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL DAVID JONES 01-251 5487

THURS 16 OCT

PETER NEWSAM on **'PERCEPTION OF MINORITIES AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA'** — the Minority Rights Group's Annual Lecture. 6pm at the Royal Society of Arts, 8 John Adam Street, London WC2. All welcome, admission free without tickets.

PUBLICATIONS

SPARTACIST 36-37: 'Healyism Implodes' p&p £1. Spartacist 38-39: 'The SWP — A Strangled Party,' p&p £1. Spartacist pamphlet 'The Socialist Workers Party: An Obituary', p&p 50p. Complete package £2.50 from: SI Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.

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Nicaragua, the War and the Press with Harry Conroy and Jonathan Steele

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

WEDNESDAY 8 OCT at 6.45
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BACKCHAT

Sticks in the mud

Huw Richards

I'D NEVER HAVE dreamed in my days as inside-forward for Bridgnorth Fourths that one day I'd lift the men's Hockey World Cup. But there it was: all I had to do was pick it up, read with fascination the engraved names of past winners, then raise it high . . .

Before former team-mates write in to say they always knew I was barmy and this proves it, I should point out that the trophy was awaiting repairs in a Hatton Gardens silversmith's office. But we can all dream and, doubtless, the captain of the Great Britain squad, surprise winners of a bronze medal at the Los Angeles Olympics, will be having similar, though infinitely more attainable dreams as he waits for the start of the World Cup at Willesden this weekend.*

Not that hockey played any part in my earliest sporting fantasies. These concerned playing outside-half in the Wales Rugby Union XV or scoring Swansea City's winner in the FA Cup Final. But any hereditary sporting talent was annexed by my younger brother. Rugby demanded speed, power or courage — leaving me with a score of nought out of three and a further minus for wearing glasses — while soccer required ball skills and was too often treated with a seriousness that is entirely understandable in professionals, but intolerable in Division Seven of the local Sunday League.

It took an unexpected invitation to play for the local hockey club to find a team game which accommodates players whose enthusiasm outreaches their talent.

In theory, hockey should have suited me even less than rugby or soccer. Controlling a small, hard ball with the curved end of a stick isn't easy for even the gifted ball player. And there's an impressive range of possible infringements. On one memorable occasion I contrived to commit 'feet' (kicking the ball) 'sticks' (lifting my stick above shoulder height) 'turning' (shielding the ball from an opponent in a way that comes naturally to a convert from soccer, but is banned for reasons that become painfully apparent to anyone tackled from behind) and 'offside' in the space of a few seconds.

There are also physical risks. Shinguards are essential, as flailing or trailing sticks can be lethal — and any mention of Wombourne, near Wolverhampton, brings back unpleasant memories of being hit in the throat by an undercut clearance.

But there were no heated and accusing inquests over who to blame for the last goal — and no fast moving 17-stone behemoths to bring to ground. My basic skills were still thoroughly limited — excluding, notably, a sense of timing — but I did have an opportunism which made me a fairly frequent goalscorer.

Where the top-class performer expects to do things well and agonises over costly errors and aberrations, the social player knows from experience that strange umpiring, Acts of God, unlucky bounces, fluky displays of dexterity by opponents or whatever else you chose to blame for your own incompetence will stop things happening as intended. So you learn to accept the innate hostility of the animate and inanimate world and enjoy the rare moments when you get it right. I still remember vividly the defence-splitting ball I hit against Nuneaton in 1977 and a goal from an impossibly narrow angle at Wombourne a year earlier (revenge possibly for that ball in the throat). Nineteen attempts out of 20 at repeat performances would trickle harmlessly into touch, be intercepted by a centre-half or produce an embarrassing air-shot.

Equally vivid are moments such as those where my stick disintegrated as I thumped the pitch, instead of the ball, at Wolverhampton Polytechnic or when I rounded the opposing keeper in a deluge at Evesham, then fell over the ball when I had only to push it into an empty net.

Kipling got it wrong. We didn't treat defeats and poor displays as disasters, but our enjoyment would have been much diminished it we hadn't know how to celebrate our rare triumphs. There was always a club bar afterwards in which to socialise with the opposition, find out how our football teams had got on and explore the recently discovered narcotic possibilities of beer: a welcome relief from the weekday realities of tedious A-level syllabuses.

The season invariably started with a trip to Wednesbury, who played on an all-weather surface in the shadow of a motorway flyover. We always lost there — except on the occasion that we had 13 players to their nine. I volunteered, mindful of this record, to be one of the two transferred to Wednesbury. Bridgnorth won 4-0.

We finished the season at Evesham, in a ground carved out of surrounding market gardens. Seeing that our opponents had an average age of about 45 our comparatively youthful side sensed an easy victory. We should have known better. There is no more dangerous opponent than someone with experience at higher levels. They may not be able to run any more, but they can stop and hit accurately. We ran around like maniacs — and even occasionally got the ball. They won 7-3, with the abiding memory the sight of our defenders carefully evading the veterans' lethal shots at short-corners while our unfortunate goalkeeper pleaded for assistance. Anyone who saw Ian Taylor's heroics in Los Angeles, getting his body in line with endless vicious projectiles, will have concluded that goalkeepers are indeed crazy.

Every team seemed to have its six-foot 17-year-old who had temporarily outgrown his strength — kindred spirits to this five foot eleven inside-forward. We also played host to a succession of Sikhs recruited from a Wolverhampton school where one of our first-teamers taught. They'd appear for a couple of games, displaying wristy skills and composure well out of our normal class, then disappear into the higher elevens just as we were getting to know them.

In time I even became a halfway adequate inside-forward — before playing in a spectacularly unsuccessful college team turned me into a lousy centre-forward. But that wasn't really important. Hockey gave me and many other frustrated rugby and soccer players the chance to enjoy a team game, play it to the best of our abilities and enjoy a sense of belonging and taking part. If the idea of sport for all means anything it must, among other things, mean that. □

**The World Hockey Cup for men runs from 4-19 October at the Willesden Stadium*

'Oh wow! It looks like my ship came in.'

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FOOD

Hot air

Colin Spencer

IN PETERBOROUGH, in the precincts of its freshly cleaned and elegant cathedral, there is a pedestrian area with restaurants clustered around it, including the Mexican **Cantina Sanchez**. I was delighted to see that every dish — that is, every tacos, tostada, enchillada or burrito — came with ground beef or chicken or in its pristine vegetarian shape. As I had just spoken outside the Corn Exchange in an Animal Rights Festival and mentioned the unnecessary surplus the EEC market now has of factory farmed beef, I was dedicated in my refusal to lower that beef mountain. What I fancied, as I dawdled in the doorway inspecting the menu, were beans — pinto or red kidney — but beans, beautifully spiced, radiant with chilli and lying on a crispy tortilla with perhaps a little guacomole and a salad on the side.

As one so often does, once inside I changed my mind and decided not on the crispy tortilla but on a softer burrito. This is a pancake like an envelope which encloses the food, the outside then being covered in a hot chilli sauce. The burrito is a complex little parcel which rings the changes in texture from soft pancakes to crisp salad, in taste from fiery, spiced tomato chilli to cool sour cream and onion with the richer and slightly oily flavour of avocado in the midst. Then, of course, in the centre, the very centre of the burrito, are those beans, luscious and earthy at the same time. The bean, the Emperor of the vegetarian kitchen, filling the diner with hot air and carbohydrate, echoing in the gullet for hours afterwards in soft, comforting explosions.

The waiter, young, bright and efficient, took the order and underlined 'no chicken and no meat'. The burrito arrived sans salsa, sans guacomole, but I was hungry. I dug into this bouncy parcel and drew out strands of chicken flesh. Still hungry, I ate around it. If I could find a bean, I would leave them the chicken and forgive all. I ate a third, delving into the parcel as if hunting for my car keys. Plenty of salad; no beans. I called the waiter over and complained about the lack of a bean. He was blank. I then drew his attention to the chicken. He was fervently apologetic, muttering obscenities about the chef. I could have anything I wanted. I asked for my first choice: a tostada. It came. It smelled and looked good, the salsa was hot and spicy, the tortilla was crisp, the salad and the melted cheese were run-of-the-mill. But who cares when, at the bottom, are the beans. But there were no beans, none at all, not a bean in sight.

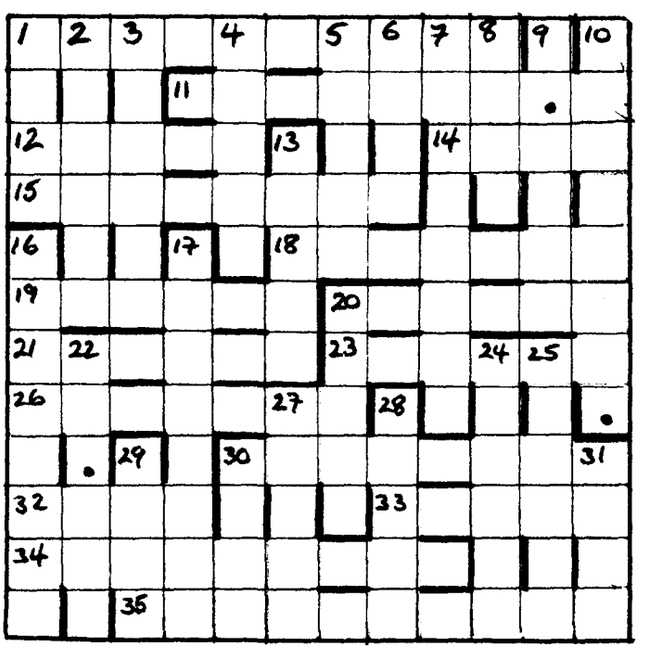
I asked the waiter. These are refried beans, he said, gesturing at an empty tortilla where not a scrap of bean, refried or not, had ever lain. But where are they? I asked. He must face it: this was a beanless tortilla. What is more, there were beanless enchilladas, beanless burritos and beanless taquitos. Did the bean exist at all, I wondered. He confessed. There were no pinto beans in Peterborough. The maize flour, the corn and the beans all came from manufacturers in Liverpool specialising in Mexican foods. They were late with deliveries. They often were. Sometimes the restaurant had to close for a couple of days.

The Cantina Sanchez has been open a year. You

Salamanca 112

'Missed'

PRIZES: £35 cheque for the first correct solution opened. Entries to Salamanca 112, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 4 November.



The six-word phrase of a quotation at 1 & 35 refers to (in this case) some answers that are clued and entered already accordingly adjusted, and can be completed by the arranged four letters which make up the person (in this case) doing the quoting. Other clues contain their jumbled answers. The dotted squares in the grid, as well as helping form a noun for the quoter also show which letter squares are to be *elsewhere* shaded wherever they occur to complete the final picture.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

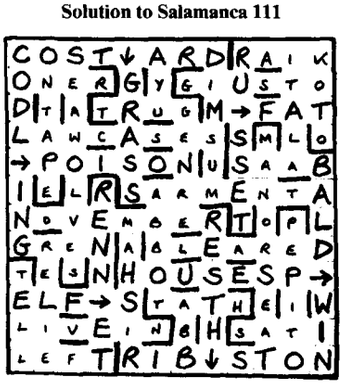
ACROSS

11 This prehistoric beast had curious form (not socially acceptable) (9)
12 A number of (in Egyptian trade) bushels (5)
14 A tumour with round edge first showing (4)
15 One has dubbed this shark 'dogfish' (8)
18 Old bird — pigeon, greatly, changed — not nearly this (7)
19 This brew looks evil (no good with milk?) (6)
20 I'm a raptor and my vital energy is provided by prey (6)
21 Principal herald in history (or nowadays) (6)
23 I'll tread briskly at a hop (6)
26 Enchanter, rich somehow during lifetime (7)
30 Nationality of girls you gave gusli lessons to? (8)
32 Cultivate a nut tree (4)
33 Found among elves, fairies, etc.? (5)
34 Having two sides close, size identical? (9)

DOWN

1 What — especially — get served on the vicarage lawn? (4)
2 Member of the Bantu family tree or his tongue (6)
3 Death, say, as the ultimate goal and leveller (6)
4 Said by hood in tight spot? (2 words, 5)
5 Monkey, one covered with blood (5)
6 The Lord's cross raised around religious leader (4)
7 One may tell of a kind of popular local myth (8)
8 Would I take you into mine? (4)
9 It could be played on a league pitch (6)
10 Does it concern sea-level and height therefrom? Yes it does (8)
13 When the air has a clammy cling my guess is it's this (5)
16 So it *can* mean 'brotherly' *or* 'sisterly'? (8)
17 Letter found in worthless stately home? (8)
20 What poet wrote in pensive style generally (5)
22 Loving's romantic culmination, say (6)
24 Sort of stew you see being spooned into head (6)
25 The sort of test that'll tax me enquiringly (6)
27 I'll make good use of mockery (guaranteed!) (5)
28 I show reverence in the short time I come up (5)
29 Scots say it's neat and trim and so on (4)
30 You may cultivate me in the garden (4)
31 Hawk goods and eventually sell them? (4)

Solution to Salamanca 111



(William) TELL reputedly split an apple with an arrow (on more than one occasion).

Prizewinner to Salamanca 111

Mrs J. Loutz
(Dampierre, France)

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can eat very well there — once they have the beans — for under a fiver.

From the ridiculous to the sublime. Anna Hegarty is well known to foodies. She used to have a small restaurant in Islington which was highly praised, almost over-praised by the *Good Food Guide*. She then moved to Stoke Newington, where her disciples went into ecstasies of purple prose trying to describe rich burgundy sauces and outlandish combinations of monkfish, chicken and strawberries. Though I had been impressed by her food in Islington, I never followed her to Stoke Newington. The prices were far too steep and the attention from the customers too fanatical. However, last year, she changed the restaurant again and has turned it into a bistro-cum-café, with the lower prices reflecting the new status. It is still called **Anna's Place**, though the old clientele feel it has become Anna's Diner. I went there for lunch. It was empty except for two other tables. The decor is quietly stylish. I sat looking out at the courtyard and stared at the washing with three pairs of Anna's knickers. The menu still has eight dishes per course; the gravlax, I wager, is still the best buy. My first course was a salmon and fresh pea mousse with a herb sauce. It looked stunning, a Neapolitan fish cone of pink and green stripes. I had salmon again for the main course which was the gravlax cut in two thick strips and served hot in a sauce. The colour of the sauce was a bit dismal, brown not being one of nature's most cheerful, and I could not place the taste. Anna enlightened me. It was a red wine sauce based on a meat glaze. There I was, after all, nibbling my way through the beef mountain. I felt the sauce was too rich, the salmon needed something buoyant and more acid to cut through its own fattiness. Besides, any mixture of meat and fish seems to me an unhappy one.

The feel of the menu is Scandinavian. There is much herring and mackerel as well as salmon. There is plenty of beef and veal on the menu too and the puddings are as good as they always were. Home-made sorbets, apple crumble, burgundy pears, orange and cinnamon ice creams. But the bill surprised me: £40 for two is hardly a café price — though, for quality, the food is hard to beat.

Unlike that at a restaurant specialising in fish, the **Trattoria dei Pescatori** in Charlotte Street, which has been flourishing for about 15 years and is always crowded at lunchtime. After eating there, I asked myself why? A large rowing boat hangs suspended from the ceiling at an alarming angle; we had to wait 30 minutes for a simple first course; the escargot tongs had to be returned to the kitchen for rewashing as they were covered in grease.

The waitress had difficulty in understanding. The spinach ordered with the Dover sole never arrived and, when I told her, she said, 'Ah good.' The shellfish in a cream sauce with rice tasted, my companion said, just like M & S. The price for a three course lunch for two with half a bottle of wine was £41. The food was pedestrian, and the ambience pretentious. Who can afford to eat such inadequate food at such inflated prices? □

Cantina Sanchez, Cowgate, Peterborough; 0733 312613
Anna's Place, 90 Mildmay Park, Islington, N1; 01-249 9379
Trattoria Dei Pescatori, 57 Charlotte St., W1; Tel: 01-580 3289

Weekend competition

No 2944 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd is said to be writing a novel about a murder in the Cabinet Office, the investigation of which is led by the PM. Could we please have extracts (max. 120 words by Wednesday — repeat Wednesday — 15 October) from what you imagine to be in Mr Hurd's book.

No 2941 **Set by Russell Lucas**

Verses by Ms Marvell 'doing the reverse' to that done in Andrew's 'To his Coy Mistress'.

Report **By Babe Bio**

Befour anything else: John Digby, we've lost your adresse (who knows? someone may have eatern it), so could you let us have it agane?

Now, abut this 'doing the reverse' stuff. Old Katie Mallett ritely complanes that she coudernt make out what we wanted: Ms Marvell instructing her bloke to hurry up or Ms Marvell instructing her bloke/woman to slow down. The second's the *most* reverse, I serpose, but we're hapy with either verierty (though neither of yours, Katie; tough). Not a bad entry, which is lucky for you: her upstairs has been tuning the chain saw. Ten quid a head to each winner.

Hurry-up verses

The Proms were super, I agree.
So is your perfumed China tea.
You're handsome, charming, cultured too;
I love to borrow books from you:
Physics and Tao or *Tales in Erse,*
You're so impeccably diverse.
But this affair's become a farce;
When are you going to make a pass?
You introduce, 'My girlfriend, Anne',
Well, justify that statement, man;
I'm not a nun, I'm not a saint,
Feminist, yes: virgin I ain't.
Don't take me to another play
Or opera. I need a lay.
I don't want *Kafka's Dick*, you berk
But yours if you can make it work.

GERARD BENSON

Had we but World enough, and Time,
Thy impotence would be no crime —
What though it take ten years to bring
Some life to this poor shrinking thing?
We'd send out galleons for sacks
Of costly aphrodisiacs
And be content enough to come
But once in a millenium.
Alas, dear heart, we are undone
Before we even have begun,
For at my back I hear the sound
Of car wheels crunching gravell'd ground —
My parents are returned! I race
To dress, clear up, put on my face,
And curse again whate'er might be
The cause of thy flaccidity.

PETER NORMAN

You don't know me? It's all too soon?
Where did you learn to love — the moon?
If human life had infinite span
I'd play your game, quaint little man;
I could advance and you still cower
Until the SDP took power.
But rushing time's no woman's friend,
As grey hairs rise and tits descend
And slipped discs weaken — and, what's more,
I've got to fit you in before
My consciousness-raising seminar,
My Save-the-Coypu fund raiser,
My battered wives aerobics class . . .
My God! Already twenty past?
Come, Andy sweet, don't cringe and frown:
Give in, rise up — and get them down!

ELIZABETH B. PATRICK

Would you but sometimes look my way,
This Writing, Marv, would be OK.
Thou on my Eyes and Forehead miles
Of Verses scrawl'st: I by the Piles
Of Paper sit and wait. The Pen
Is not the part of other men
That takes a pounding ev'ry Night.
Some are all talk, but you're all Write.
My Bed's a soft and downy crib,
Where none but you would chew his Nib.
Stone me, I used to have more fun
With John: at least he got things Donne!

JEREMY BROWNE

Slow-down verses

Had we but prophylactics three
I'd mirror your alacrity;
We'd fornicate from dusk to dawn,
To end at sunrise in a yawn.
Exhausted, we would say: enough
Of games conducted in the buff
And sleep until the strength came back
For one more amorous attack.
But at my back I always hear
The feet of infants pattering near
And would you plastic potties change?
Or up and down at Sainsbury's range?
Would you forgo your darts and lager
To be a model, sharing father?
Or would you imitate the rest
And scarper from the broody nest?

NICHOLAS MURRAY

'Had we but world enough, and time'?
What makes you think that paradigm,
That corny *carpe diem* spiel
Will get your itching hands a feel?
I guess you think I'll howl, 'Oh shit!
The world is ending! This is it!
I'd better quickly have a fuck.'
Forget it, buddy. No such luck.
OK, you've got a way with words,
But when it comes to 'pulling birds'
You're unoriginal, not hep.
You come on like some randy rep
Who hangs around in hotel bars
And talks of money, booze and cars.
This lady doesn't want to play.
She's smart. And, anyway, she's gay.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

Hi Marvellman! It seems your fate
To be severely out of date:
Three recent decades have in haste
Your fine seducer's art laid waste.
Sixties: pill was liberation,
Sex sans the drag of procreation;
Seventies: art gave way to science,
G spots, manuals, the odd appliance
With baffling things males had to do
To make the females like it too —
No need to languish in dejection
So long as you sustained erection.
You note yourself time has a knack
Of snatching sexual options back:
Late Eighties' virgins aren't plain mean,
It's just we don't know where you've been.

JACQUELINE GEMMELL

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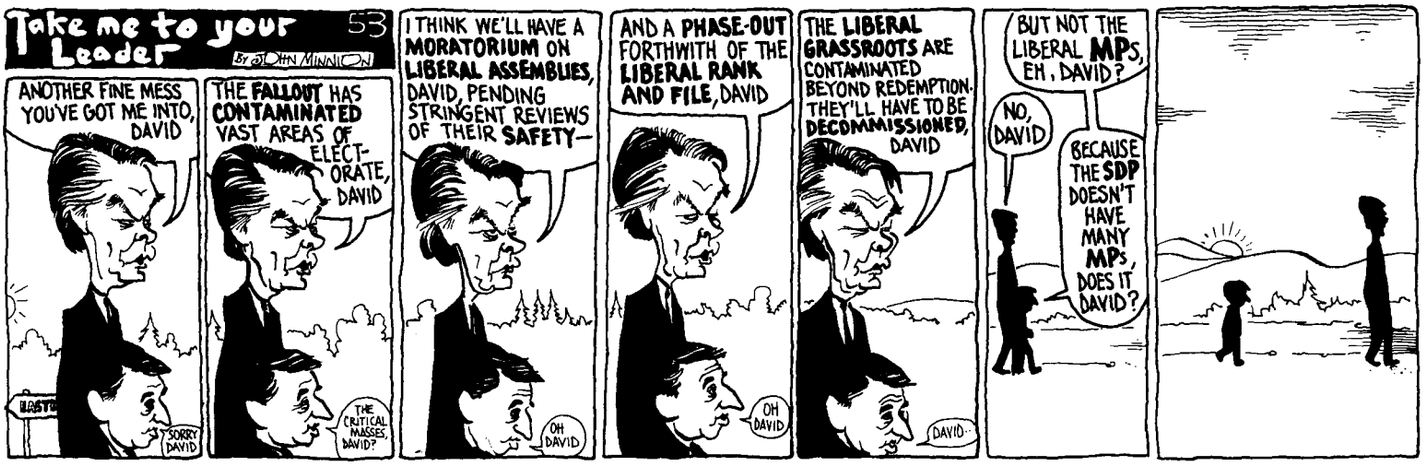

Take me to your Leader 53
By JOHN MINNION
ANOTHER FINE MESS YOU'VE GOT ME INTO, DAVID
SORRY DAVID
THE FALLOUT HAS CONTAMINATED VAST AREAS OF ELECT-ORATE, DAVID
THE CRITICAL MASSES, DAVID?
I THINK WE'LL HAVE A MORATORIUM ON LIBERAL ASSEMBLIES, DAVID, PENDING STRINGENT REVIEWS OF THEIR SAFETY—
OH DAVID
AND A PHASE-OUT FORTHWITH OF THE LIBERAL RANK AND FILE, DAVID
OH DAVID
THE LIBERAL GRASSROOTS ARE CONTAMINATED BEYOND REDEMPTION. THEY'LL HAVE TO BE DECOMMISSIONED, DAVID
DAVID...
BUT NOT THE LIBERAL MPs, EH, DAVID?
NO, DAVID
BECAUSE THE SDP DOESN'T HAVE MANY MPs, DOES IT DAVID?

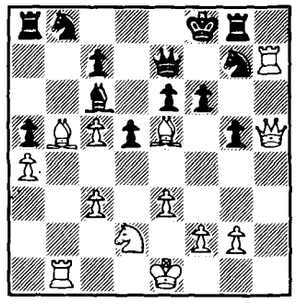
Chess

THIS TIME I must tackle the enigma-wrapped mystery of K v K game 16. The first 17 moves repeated the opening of game 14 (see *NS* 19 September):

Kasparov-Karpov, Leningrad, 15 September. Ruy Lopez
1. e4 e5 2. Nf3 Nc6 3. Bb5 a6 4. Ba4 Nf6 5. 0-0 Be7 6. Re1 b5 7. Bb3 d6 8. c3 0-0 9. h3 Bb7 10. d4 Re8 11. Nbd2 h6. 12. a4 Bf8 13. Bc2 exd4 14. cxd4 Nb4 15. Bb1 c5 16. d5 Nd7 17. Ra3 c4 18. Nd4 Varying from the 18. axb5 of the earlier game. **Qf6 19. N2f3 Nc5 20. axb5 axb5 21. Nxb5 Rxa3 22. Nxa3 Ba6** So Karpov has given up a pawn, in return for which his active Knights, impending occupation of d3 and pressure against b2 look to be fair compensation. However, for full satisfaction he really needs his black-squared Bishop to be playing a more active role (e.g. on g7). **23. Re3 Rb8 24. e5 dxe5 25. Nxe5 Nbd3 26. Ng4** Note that on 26. Qc2 Black has the powerful reply 26 . . . Nb3!. **Qb6 27. Rg3 g6 28. Bxh6 Qxb2** Now surely Karpov is winning? His Q-side attack has broken through and the hapless Na3 is a goner. **29. Qf3!?** Brilliant or desperate? **Nd7** Karpov does not want to be checked on f6. But couldn't he have taken the Knight? No, because then White blasts through with 29 . . . Qxa3 30. Nf6+ Kh8 31. Qh5!!, e.g. 31 . . . Rxb1+ 32. Bc1+ gxh5 33. Rg8 mate, 31 . . . Bd6 32. Bf8+ with the same mate, or 31 . . . Bg7 32. Qh4! with a deadly discovered check to follow. **30. Bxf8 Kxf8 31. Kh2** Strange as it may seem, this is the only move. Otherwise he could not play Nh6 because of the Queen check on c1. **Rb3** This is rational only if he intends to use the Rook to recapture on d3 or capture on a3. But why not 31 . . . Qxa3 now? Since 32. Bxd3 Qxd3! 33. Qf4 Qxd5 34. Nf6 Nxf6 35. Qxb8+ Kg7 can hardly be adequate for White, Kasparov would presumably have played 32. Nh6 N7e5 33. Qf6 — and if there is a defence against the threats of Bxd3, Rxg6 and d6, I don't see it. As played, Karpov is ready to meet 32. Nh6 with 32 . . . Qf6. **32. Bxd3 cxd3** Karpov spent half an hour over this move to leave himself very short of time, which must indicate some hitch in his calculations. After 32 . . . Rxd3 33. Qf4 Qxa3 34. Nh6 Qe7 35. Rxg6 Qe5 the tactic that actually wins the game for Kasparov does not work, as the Black Rook controls d6. Perhaps Karpov was not satisfied with the ending after 36. Qxe5 Nxe5 37. Rxa6 Rxd5, though Black's c-pawn is strong. **33. Qf4 Qxa3** A vital point is 33 . . . Rxa3 34. Nh6 Qf6 35. Qb4+ Qe7 36. d6!. **34. Nh6 Qe7 35. Rxg6 Qe5 36. Rg8+ Ke7 37. d6+!** A terrible blow. **Ke6 38. Re8+ Kd5 39. Rxe5+ Nxe5 40. d7 Rb8 41. Nxf7 1-0.**

An incredible, indeed almost incomprehensible game. Karpov appeared to be winning at move 28, yet was definitely lost by move 34. So where is the improvement in the defence? Or was Kasparov's attacking intuition better than everyone else's judgement?

An opening innovation in the next game gave Karpov a clear advantage which he exploited in simple and straightforward style, beating the champion as if he were some feckless novice. Still, Kasparov had a comfortable 9½-7½ lead. He only needed 2½ points from the remaining 7 games. Where was the problem? Perhaps only that Kasparov is the least modest of mortals and nemesis awaited him in this position in game 18:



25. Qf3 Kf7 26. Qh5+ Kf8 27. Qf3 Kf7 Obviously the champion could, if he chose, draw by repetition here with 28. Qh5+. Given the match-score it would be a strong choice. Instead he plays the position on its merits. Hubris? I should rather say it is the bravest and most sporting decision ever made in such an important match. **28. Rh6 Ne8 29. e4!? g4 30. Qf4 Bxb5 31. Rxb5 Nd7 32. Bxc7 Nxc5 33. Qe3 Nxe4 34. Nxe4 dxe4 35. Bxa5 f5 36. Bb4 Qd7 37. Qd4** Using the little tactic 37 . . . Qxd4? 38. Rb7+ **Ra7** Karpov is very vulnerable on the black squares and Kasparov's ambition would probably have been rewarded after the strong and simple move 38. Bc5!. If then 38 . . . Qxd4 39. Bxd4 Black's Ra7 is squeezed: it cannot leave the second rank because of 40. Rb7+, yet if it leaves the a-file White can push his passed a-pawn. However, in time-pressure Gary plays a couple of feeble moves and the position turns round completely. **38. Rh7+? Ng7 39. a5? Kg6!** Suddenly White is driven back in confusion. After 40. Rh4 Qxb5 41. Qxa7 Rd8 42. Qe3 Qa4 43. Qc1 e3! 44. fxe3 Qa2 Black has a winning attack. **40. Qxd7 Rxd7 41. Rh4 Rgd8 42. c4 Rd1+ 43. Ke2 Rc1 44. a6 Rc2+ 45. Ke1 Ra2 46. Rb6 Rd3 47. c5 Ra1+ 48. Ke2 Ra2+** Repeating to gain time for the crucial calculation. **49. Ke1 g3! 50. fxg3 Rxg3 51. Kf1 Rgxg2 52. Be1 Rgc2 53. c6 Ra1 54. Rh3 f4 55. Rb4 Kf5 56. Rb5+ e5 57. Ra5 Rd1 58. a7** Now nothing can stop White from Queening, but . . . **e3 0-1.** Nothing can stop Black mating either. The threat is 59 . . . Rf2+, and if 59. Rf3 Nh5 60. Kg1 (or 60. a8=Q Ng3+ etc) Rxe1+ 61. Rf1 f3 followed by 62 . . . Rg2+ and 63 . . . Ng3 mate.

What a match!

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☐ Dr David Whittaker, a forensic dentist adviser to the Home Office, said he had experimented to see whether an earlobe could be bitten through by a person wearing a gumshield. He was unable to bite cleanly through the ear of a dead pig, which was similar in structure to the human earlobe, but was able to tear the lobe off with a single wrench. — *Guardian* (Min Birdsey)

☐ Council workmen are making 'creep-up' calls on council house tenants . . . The worker summoned by a tenant to do urgent repairs tip-toes down the path, makes a short tap on the knocker, pushes a note through the letter box saying he called while the occupier was out, and sprints back down the path. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

☐ A request by the Woodcraft Folk to run a lottery to help pay for the establishment of an 'Elfin' group of 6-9 year-olds in the town was turned down at a story meeting of Cherwell District Council's recreation committee . . . A leaflet issued by the Folk lists one race, the rights of children, equality for men and women and world peace among its principles. Cllr John Brown said: 'It is quite obvious that it is a subversive document and we do not want anything to do with the movement.' — *Oxford Times* (Leonard Cox)

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